

Theology *for* Renewal

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BISHOPS, PRIESTS, LAITY

by KARL RAHNER, S.J.

translated by
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The Chapter "The Episcopate and the Primacy"

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Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
ASS	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i>
CIC	<i>Corpus Iuris Canonici</i>
DB	Denzinger-Bannwart, <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i>
NRT	<i>Nouvelle revue théologique</i>
SZ	<i>Stimmen der Zeit</i>
WW	<i>Wort und Wahrheit</i>
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>

Theology *for* Renewal

I*

The Episcopate and the Primacy

1. *The State of the Question*

IS IT PERMISSIBLE to feel that we could reflect more on the constitution of the Church than we have hitherto done? Since the Church and her theology are always aware of her nature, there is never any question of a leap from down-right ignorance to knowledge, say, like the discovery of Australia, but rather of a growth in the reflex consciousness of a knowledge which, in substance, the Church has always possessed, as when, for example, after a long life of active and candid self-discovery, a person may additionally also come to know himself with the help of all available psychological tests and concepts.

Even today, this reflex knowledge of her own permanent nature which the Church has can grow. Deeper insight is possible not only into the actual mysteries of this Church which is the community of the faithful in the Spirit of God,

* This chapter is translated by Richard Strachan. The remainder of the book is translated by Cecily Hastings.

the body of Christ, the beginning of the Kingdom of God, the primal sacrament of God's eschatological salvation. It can also embrace her constitution—that is to say, those juridical bonds which create and sustain her as a "perfect society." Here too, one may well think, the nature of the Church could be conceived in clearer and more conscious fashion. For if we consult one of the current theological textbooks, we learn that the Church has a "hierarchical" structure, in that Christ entrusted to the Apostolic College and to the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, the power to preach the Gospel, to administer the sacraments, and to give spiritual guidance. We learn that the Church is not a purely voluntary association of a democratic kind, established by men, but one whose fundamental rights, duties and powers were established by God.

We are further told that this hierarchically constituted Church has a "monarchical" summit in the immediate, universal primacy of jurisdiction of Peter and his successors, the popes. But with this the doctrine of the constitution of the Church, insofar as that constitution is of direct divine origin, is exhausted. It would seem to us that the relation between the hierarchic-episcopal and the monarchic-papal structure of the Church—a question which, as we know, the Vatican Council of 1870 was not allowed time to broach—is still not clear. Nor indeed is the one homogeneous nature of this constitution clarified, its ultimate basic idea, by merely affirming these two powers in the Church. A certain obscurity still shrouds the "metaphysics" of the Church's constitution.

When such a problem is raised one can, of course, say that in this matter an answer can hardly be expected beyond the clear and common teaching. After all, it can be argued,

the Church is a juridical entity unique in history, instituted by a free disposition of God which cannot be deduced from necessary metaphysical principles, both of which facts—her uniqueness and her foundation through God's free will—render it unlikely that, by means of some sort of supernatural philosophy of law and constitutional metaphysics (which would always proceed from general and necessary principles), much more could be said than is already explicitly known. One could indeed ask oneself whether there is such a thing as a written constitution of the Church; or, better, wonder that there is none. The Code of Canon Law is, in content, purpose and make-up, not a constitution of the Church, even though it can be said to contain the most important constitutional rules. It might be asked further, whether there could be such a thing as a comprehensive written constitution of the Church on the lines of a modern, written State constitution. But the question cannot be pursued here.

This scepticism may be justified. Those who profess it will certainly not be refuted by the modest observations that follow. The author does not presume to attempt a comprehensive solution to the problem that has been posed, but merely to set forth some tentative considerations prompted by the feeling that we can and should make progress in the theology of this constitution, which is more than a matter of articles. Such considerations may also have a practical import. For although the nature of the Church is of divine origin and indestructible, nevertheless its realization in everyday life, even when under the protection of the promised Holy Ghost, is still exposed to man's freedom, to his whims and to his errors. And therefore this nature can be manifested either to better or to worse effect. A deeper, more conscious knowledge

of the Church's nature can also contribute towards the ever purer realization of this nature, even in her most ordinary activities, and it is precisely through this contribution that the Spirit of the Church affords her his own assistance.

We shall try to form a few ideas about the constitution of the Church by comparing it with the constitutions of other societies. This method is perfectly legitimate. For, although we cannot thereby directly contemplate the ultimate mystery of the Church, still she is a visible society with legal powers and a juridical framework which on the one hand belong to her divinely established essence (therefore not merely to the human law within the Church), and on the other hand (because they are found within this world, incarnate) lend themselves to comparison with other human legal relationships just as the humanity of Christ can be compared with the nature of other men, because he became "consubstantial" with us.

2. *The Constitution of the Church*

It is commonly said that the Church has a monarchical constitution. If this is taken to mean that the Pope, as an individual, has full, direct, ordinary and general episcopal primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church and each of her parts and members—including the bishops—then the monarchical constitution of the Church is axiomatic for Catholics.¹ But a monarchical constitution is usually understood to mean an hereditary monarchy and not an elective

¹ Vatican Council; *DB*, No. 1831; *CIC*, can. 218.

one, whereas the Pope is at least *de facto* elected.² This distinction is not insignificant. For where office and sovereign power are hereditary and where, therefore, their subject is designated by biological factors largely independent of the intellectual and moral decisions of men, the state or society in question is more stable and compact than where the bearer of supreme power is ever and again designated by election, i.e., by a free, deliberate act of men themselves. This also holds true where the actual content of power subsists independent of the electors. Even here the *exercise* of this power is deeply influenced by the historical, the elective character of the chosen ruler, and therefore by the character of his electors as well. To define the Church as a monarchy is to fail to throw into relief the scope which, as history shows, here remains for the play of the charismatic and unexpected qualities of the Church's character, her perennial youthfulness, her vigour.

Furthermore, monarchy, when not reduced by an essentially extraneous element into constitutional monarchy, is of its own nature "absolute" monarchy. This need not mean tyranny or totalitarianism. An absolute monarchy may recognize that it is bound to observe the natural law as, for example, the better representatives of eighteenth-century absolutism did; it may be enlightened or patriarchal absolut-

² In the present context we cannot decide the question whether this must be so by divine law, or whether *per se* a pope—since celibacy is only a positive Church law—could set up the Church as an hereditary monarchy, or himself designate his successor in some other way. Cf. for example, A. Straub, *De Ecclesia Christi*, Innsbruck (1912), no. 596; J. Salaverri, "De Ecclesia Christi," *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, 1, 4th ed., Madrid (1958), p. 655, n. 41.

ism; it may, because of pressing physical circumstances or by a policy consciously adopted (though not really consistent with the system as such), respect a defined and organically grown social order such as that of Estates. Nevertheless, such a monarchy can be absolute to the extent that everything within the bounds of physical possibility and of morality—which can be realized in a given historical situation—proceeds from the will of one man and of one man only. Now, is the Church a monarchy in this sense? The answer is not easy. Is someone an absolute monarch in the sense defined if he possesses *suprema et plena potestas jurisdictionis vere episcopalis, ordinaria et immediata*?³ The answer, of course, depends on terminological precisions which are always arbitrary to a certain extent, since they could be expressed differently regardless of the reality or the truth of the objects and propositions under consideration. But if we accept the meaning of an absolute monarchy according to the definition given above, then we must say that the Pope is not a monarch⁴ of the Church.

The reasons are clear. In an absolute monarchy there are no constitutional authorities besides the monarch, existing independent of the monarch's will. Indeed there may be facts and moral obligations which limit the will of the absolute monarch. But where his will is fundamentally limited by some legally binding reality which, as such, belongs to the constitutional structure of the society and not merely to the moral norms which stand above positive constitutional law,

³ CIC, can. 218.

⁴ The Vatican Council and the CIC therefore do not use this concept. When it does appear in theology it is used in a broader sense than that defined here.

we can no longer speak of an absolute monarchy. But the Church is so constituted. The will of the Pope, insofar as he has the highest authority in the Church, is limited by a reality which, according to the very will of God, belongs to the constitution of the Church, namely, the episcopate. Not only is the Pope physically unable to abolish the episcopate (since in doing so he would rob himself of the means of administering his government of the universal Church), but he also confronts an episcopate which, as such, is not his civil service instituted by himself which he could abolish, at least legally, if not in fact. For the episcopate itself is of divine right.⁵ It is only conjoined with this episcopate—as immediately sprung from the institution of Christ as itself—that the papal primacy juridically constitutes the Church.

This does not exclude the Pope from being above the individual bishop as an individual, even in his official capacity as bishop. The Pope has direct and ordinary jurisdiction over each bishop as well. He determines which person shall possess the powers of a bishop,⁶ and according to what is

⁵ Cf. the Council of Trent (DB, 960 and 966); Vatican Council (DB, 1821 and 1826); CIC, can. 108. Accordingly, Leo XIII in his encyclical *Satis Cognitum* expressly teaches that the bishops are not to be considered as representatives of the Roman Pope, since they have their own proper authority: “. . . nec tamen Vicarii Romanorum Pontificum putandi, quia potestatem gerunt sibi propriam . . .” (AAS 28 [1895–6], p. 723; cf. also DB, 1962). Hence they care for their flocks not in the name of the Pope, but in Christ’s and their own name, so that they are successors of the Apostles by divine decree. Pius XII emphasized both of these points in *Mystici Corporis*. (AAS, 35 [1943], pp. 211ff.; DB, 2287.) Cf. also Pius XII in his allocution *Si Diligis*. (AAS, 46 [1954], p. 314.)

⁶ DB, 968; 1750ff.; CIC, can. 329, § 2.

now the common teaching, gives that person his powers.⁷ By that very fact it is open to the Pope to fix the precise limits of these powers, to extend them, to restrict them by reserving certain elements of these powers to himself, even in principle, although, of their nature, they would fall within the bishop's competence. But it does not follow (quite the contrary) that the episcopate as a whole could be abolished by the Pope, that it is only an instrument of papal authority, that therefore the bishops are only the Pope's officials, who, as his functionaries, are mere executive organs of the one absolute, monarchical power of the Pope. As physical persons they receive their authority from the Pope. But he does not confer on them a part of his own personal power to be exercised by them in his name. He gives them a power which, as distinct from that of the Pope (even though subject to it), must exist in the Church according to the will of Christ himself, and forms one of the constituent elements of the Church and not of the Papacy as such.

If it is true that the Pope has a universal, supreme and direct episcopal jurisdiction over the whole Church and there-

⁷ Cf. Salaverri, p. 632, no. 374, where he refers to Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis* (AAS, 35 [1943], pp. 211ff.; DB, 2287) and *Ad Sinarum Gentem* (AAS, 47 [1955], p. 9). In accordance with what has been said above, in conferring this office the Pope does not delegate a part of his own authority to the bishop nominated by him, but grants him a share in that authority of the universal episcopate which Christ has entrusted to the Church. The ability to communicate a power and the ability to exercise the same power when it has not been communicated to another, are obviously not the same thing. Hence we cannot conclude that what the bishop receives is a delegated papal authority, he being thus a mere official of the Pope, from the fact that he receives his authority through the Pope.

fore over the bishops too, then it must be said that the authority of the bishops, whereby they are not mere functionaries of the Pope, considered *materially* (that is, in its mere objectivity and through its subordination to the higher jurisdiction of the Pope), cannot be separated from papal authority.⁸ This means that there is nothing the bishops can do which the Pope could not do, and that all they can do they can do in subordination to the Pope. There is no doubt that this incontestable position, solemnly taught by the Vatican Council, gave the impression both inside and especially outside the Church, that the bishops are only officials, functionaries of the Pope. When, however, it is pointed out that according to the equally definitive common doctrine the episcopate is of divine right, since the Church expressly teaches (Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius XII) that even *after* the Vatican Council, the bishops are not mere officials of the Pope, it still remains difficult to see how the two facts—the universal and direct primacy of jurisdiction of the Pope on the one hand, and the divine institution and indissolubility of the episcopate on the other (as an irreducible, if not independent power)—can be reconciled with each other. Because this point remains obscure in practice the notion persists, both inside and outside the Church, that she is an absolute monarchy governed by the Pope through his officials, the bishops.

Why should we not openly and candidly admit that this unexpressed, but widespread and almost instinctive feeling can have involuntary but not insignificant effects on the life of the Church? One of these effects may be (and here we

⁸ For this reason the Vatican Council uses the concept "episcopal" to describe the Pope's authority. (DB, 1827.)

would pass no judgement on the existence and actual extent of this effect) that the "official" feels that the degree of his responsible initiative is very limited, since as the mere organ of a higher authority he must almost invariably wait for the initiative to come from above. It may be felt that the obscurity of the question we have been discussing could be clarified to better effect than hitherto.

3. *Primacy and Episcopate Compared with the Relationship between Universal Church and Local Church*

The non-Catholic legal historian who does not believe in the organic development of the Church's constitutional law will say that the doctrine of the divine institution of the episcopate and its peculiar rights and duties is a verbal residue from the time when such was the actual state of affairs in the Catholic Church; that her teaching on the universal and direct papal primacy of jurisdiction even over the bishops, as this has been understood and put into practice since the Vatican Council, cannot in fact be reconciled with the old doctrine, as is shown by usage, by people's feelings and by the admission that there is no legal power of any substance which the bishop could independently exercise in such a way that the Pope could not withdraw the exercise of it from him by restricting his authority, or deposing him, or the like.

There are a number of ways in which we can try to shed light upon this obscurity. First of all the question arises: Whence comes this remarkable duality, this interlocking of papal and episcopal authority? How can it be made clear that the concept here confronting us is not so involved, so

impenetrable, so apparently tortuous as to indicate a merely verbal harmonization of two irreconcilables?

The historical and theological answer to this question seems to lie in the fact that an individual "Church" is not just an administrative district of the whole Church, but bears a unique relationship to the universal Church, one based on the nature of the Church and on her differentiation from natural territorial societies. It is in the light of this relationship that the relationship between pope and bishop can be understood and justified. What appeared to be the suspect complexity of this relation now reveals itself as a consequence of the Church's very character as a supernatural mystery.

These statements require elucidation. We could try to answer our question by referring to the Apostles and their appointment by Christ as hierarchical leaders of the Church under Peter. Indeed, ecclesiology rightly appeals to the foundation of the Apostolic College by Christ in order to prove the existence in the Church of the episcopal office and its establishment by Christ, while clearly recognizing that the Apostles were not simply the first bishops (since they enjoyed prerogatives which bishops do not have, because they were not local bishops), and that it is not so easy as one would gather from many a textbook to determine whether a monarchical episcopate existed always and everywhere from the very beginning, or whether there was, here and there in the primitive Church, associate government of individual Christian communities, albeit authoritative and proceeding from above.

If, however, we merely cite the position of Peter and the Apostles in the primitive Church in attempting to explain the seemingly remarkable relationship between primacy and

episcopate, then we defer the question without answering it. For we still must explain why the other Apostles are not reduced to the status of mere administrative organs and representatives of the Petrine authority, if we assign to Peter the same authority according to Scripture that the Vatican dogma predicates of the Pope. Therefore we should not in the first instance fall back on the relation between Peter and the Apostles, since the bishops, governing as they do a limited territory, differ essentially from the Apostles, even from the point of view of jurisdiction, so that it is not at all easy to say to what extent they are "successors" of the Apostles, and it is best to understand this expression in the sense that the function of the Apostolic College as a whole is continued in the Church primarily by the Episcopal College as a whole, and not in the sense that each bishop is the direct successor of a particular Apostle, because in that case neither his confinement to one territory nor his more limited teaching power could be plausibly explained.

Therefore, as we were saying, the solution⁹ should be sought in the fundamental relation which obtains between the local Church and the universal Church. It has long been acknowledged that this is a unique relation not found between other societies and their parts, at least not in this intensity and with this significance. The layman in these questions will see this most clearly if he remembers that one speaks of the universal Church and of the individual community, even in the New Testament, as the "Church." The Church which Christ redeemed by his blood is the universal Church; but the individual community at a certain place is also the "Church," in Ephesus, for example. This strange way of speaking cannot be explained by saying that the word

⁹ To put it more cautiously, a partial solution of the question.

for the whole is used to designate the part and that there is nothing strange about it. It is as strange as calling London the United Kingdom. Behind this usage lie a conviction and an intuition which are not at all self-explanatory, and which mean something quite different from the truism that a particular community is a member and an administrative district of the universal Church.

The idea at the root of this usage has a history going back far beyond New Testament times. It is rooted in the problem of pre-Christian Jewish theology as to where that holy People of God, to whom his promises were made, is palpably and conclusively to be found in history, since this same people in the concrete (according to the "flesh") remains recalcitrant to God's decree and unbelieving. The thought naturally arises that, since God's promises and faithfulness cannot come to nought, the "people," "Israel," still truly exists, even if it survives only in a "faithful remnant," in a brotherhood of a few loyal souls. A limited administrative district in one community cannot cause the totality of this community to live on, when the totality as such has disappeared, if the part was nothing more than a part, a mere organ, not endowed with the sensibility and the various faculties of the whole organism. On the other hand, if the whole is so present in the part that it can fully consummate itself there according to its nature, and if the whole cannot by any means disappear while the part still lives, then the part is indeed more than a mere part, and rightly bears the name of the whole. This is exactly how pre-Christian Jewish theology conceived the faithful remnant, the individual community of brethren, in which God was truly served in faith according to his law.

In order to develop this basic thought more systematically

we can also say that the Church as a whole, where she becomes "event" in the full sense of the term, is necessarily a local Church. In the local Church the whole Church becomes tangible. Further explanation is needed to show exactly what this means.¹⁰

When asked what is this Church in its entirety, founded by Christ for all men, the answer we, as men of today, instinctively turn to is a "perfect society," an organization founded by Christ with its hierarchical structure of offices, with the powers pertaining to these offices, with the many men who, under particular conditions, gain membership in this social organization. All this, indeed, exists and is of the greatest importance for salvation. This society, like any other, has a permanent legal existence which is not discontinued even if we suppose that this Church at a particular time is not operative in any of her powers or in any of her members. A legally founded society has a type of existence different from that of substances. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that, when the Church acts, that is, teaches, confesses the Faith, prays, celebrates the Sacrifice of Christ etc., she reaches a higher degree of actuality than she does by her mere continuing existence. She is a visible society; as really visible she must continually realize her historical, spatio-temporal tangibility through the actions of men. She must become "event" over and over again.

It is not as if these "events" in their separated individuality in space and time founded the Church anew. An actualism of this sort, which would basically deny the social constitu-

¹⁰ In the next few paragraphs we repeat the ideas which we developed in *Die Pfarre*, ed. Hugo Rahner, S.J., Freiburg im Breisgau (1956).

tion of the Church, tradition, apostolic succession and any real Church law of divine right, is foreign to Catholic ecclesiology. But the static and historical continuity of a permanently existing Church does not imply that this Church need not become "event" again and again at definite spatio-temporal points, that she need not pass from a certain potentiality to a particular actuality, and that the whole enduring essence of the Church is not ordered towards this event. If we distinguish in this way between the Church as a mere institution with an enduring social constitution on the one hand, and the Church as "event" on the other, then it follows that she becomes an actual "event," with a spatio-temporal tangibility, in the highest degree when she becomes "event" as the communion of saints, as a society. Naturally she is also present when an individual acts in the Church and for the Church by virtue of the authority of Christ and of an office in the Church. But it cannot be denied that where the Church appears as a communion, i.e., as a plurality of men bound together by a visible occurrence and united by grace, she attains a higher degree of actuality as the Church, than she does when the individual holder of an office brings the Church to actuality by an action of his own in which the other members of the Church take no active part.

Now we ask where and when does the Church become, in the sense indicated above, an "event" in the most intense and actual way? Essentially the Church is the historically continuing presence in the world of the incarnate Word of God. She is the historical tangibility of the salvific will of God as revealed in Christ. Therefore the Church is most tangibly and intensively an "event" where (through the words of consecration) Christ himself is present in his own congrega-

tion as the crucified and resurrected Saviour, the fount of salvation; where the Redemption makes itself felt in the congregation by becoming sacramentally visible; where the "New and Eternal Testament" which he founded on the Cross is most palpably and actually present in the holy remembrance of its first institution. Therefore the celebration of the Eucharist is the most intensive event of the Church. For by this celebration not only is Christ present in the Church's liturgical solemnity as the Redeemer of his body, as the salvation and lord of the Church; but in the Eucharist the union of the faithful with Christ and with one another is also most tangibly visible, and at the Holy Table is most interiorly realized. Inasmuch as the celebration of the Eucharist is the sacramental anticipation of the heavenly marriage banquet, the final, eternal form of the community of saints shines forth even now in this solemnity just as the source of the Church, Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, is present in it.

An essential characteristic of the eucharistic celebration as a sacramental rite is that it must be localized. (The same holds true for the other sacraments, which are all essentially bound up with the corporeal.) It can only be celebrated by one congregation gathered together in one place. But this means that the Church, without prejudice to her social constitution, permanency, universality and relation to all men, is by her inmost nature oriented towards a local concretization and actualization. Therefore not only does the Eucharist as an event in a place occur in the Church; the Church herself becomes in the fullest sense an event only in the local celebration of the Eucharist. That is the fundamental reason why Scripture calls the individual communities *ecclesia*, the same name that the unity of the faithful all over the world

possesses. It is not only true that the Eucharist exists because the Church exists; it is also true, if rightly understood, that the Church exists because the Eucharist exists. The Church is and remains, even as a whole, only because she is actualized again and again in the one all-embracing "event" of herself, that is, in the Eucharist. Because this event is essentially localized at one point of time and space and in one local community, therefore the local Church is not only an agency of the universal Church, subsequently founded, and which she could easily dispense with, but is the "event" itself of this universal Church.

If, by some historical catastrophe, a great nation were reduced to a village, then one could no longer correctly say that the nation still existed, that its nature as an historical entity was still realized. But if, *per impossibile*, the Church were reduced to one diocese with its bishop, its legitimate pastor would also be the Pope of Rome, and—this is a decisive point—exactly as much would occur in it as can occur in the universal Church and is the actualization of her nature.¹¹ She is the proclamation of the dominion of God revealed in the crucified and resurrected flesh of the Son of God as the tribunal of grace over the sins of the world. This proclama-

¹¹ Properly to evaluate such an "actualistic" definition of the Church the following must be taken into consideration: a natural society can do or neglect to do many things and still exist; it can neglect to do many things (even though wrongly) that it ought to do; and there are not many things the neglect of which would destroy its existence. In the Church, however, there are certain acts which were made a part of her very essence by her divine Founder and which he guaranteed would always take place. Hence the act here lies really in the potency and is not a mere accident of the Church.

tion takes place through the legitimate eucharistic celebration of the holy community subjecting itself to the redeeming dominion of God in the remembrance of the Lord's death.

Therefore a local Church is not brought about by an atomizing division of the world territory of the universal Church, but by the concentration of the Church into her own nature as "event." For this reason, no doubt, the earliest local Church was a bishop's Church. And we might note that the *presbyteroi* (priests and pastors) originally were not those who were needed because there were a number of local communities, but were from the first the senate of the local bishop. As a result the original (episcopal) local communities contained only elements of divine foundation: the holy cultic community of Christ with an Apostle or his successor at its head.

What conclusions can be drawn from the relations we have briefly sketched between the universal Church and the local Church (or better, between the Church as she is everywhere and the same Church as she appears in one particular place), which can be applied to the relation between the Primacy and the episcopate?

Since the Church is and is intended to be a world Church, insofar as there should be everywhere true adorers of the Father in the Spirit and in the name of Christ, and insofar as this Church, according to her historically perceptible constitution, is intended to be one, to that extent the Primacy exists. Inasmuch as the same one and universal Church is intended to appear in particular places and precisely in this way to achieve its full consummation, namely, in the celebration of the Eucharist and the rest of the sacraments, to this

extent the episcopate exists of divine right.¹² This episcopacy must therefore have all the rights and powers that should belong to it if, on the one hand, the Church as a whole (which does not mean wholly) and in her highest act is to make an historical, tangible appearance wherever an individual bishop rules; and if, on the other hand, this Church, though "appearing" locally, is the same one which is spread over the whole world and is represented in its catholicity by the Pope. We can say that, in the sense and to the extent that the whole Church is completely present in the local Church, the Church's powers of jurisdiction and order are completely present in the local bishop. The papal authority is not more comprehensive in this respect, but in the sense that the Pope alone, by divine right of course, represents the unity of the whole Church as the totality of the local Churches. This is quite simply demonstrated by the fact that the Pope has no power of order beyond that of the ordinary bishop, although, from an absolute and comprehensive point of view, the *potestas ordinis* is a higher one than the power of jurisdiction.

It will not do merely to accept this equality as the result of an arbitrary divine decree; rather we may and must seek its essential basis, even though we may hold that this can be

¹² Naturally this does not mean that we could of ourselves, and independent of positive revelation, deduce primacy and episcopate from this principle. But if we already know from positive sources about the positive institution of primacy and episcopate, then we can clearly see their essential connection with this fundamental concept of the Church. For even a positive free institution can conform to the fundamental nature of a thing and does not mean positivistic arbitrariness.

known only as a result of the express revelation of the fact. Since therefore the Church must make its appearance in particular places, "the episcopate exists in virtue of the same divine institution on which the Papacy rests; it too has its rights and duties, which the Pope has neither the right nor the power to change. It is therefore a complete misunderstanding . . . to suppose . . . that the bishops are only instruments of the Pope, officials of his without personal responsibility." "According to the constant teaching of the Catholic Church, as expressly declared also by the Vatican Council, the bishops are not mere instruments of the Pope, not papal officials without responsibility of their own, but, established by the Holy Spirit and taking the place of the Apostles, as true shepherds they feed and rule the flocks entrusted to them . . ."¹³ Insofar as the local bishop by his own teaching represents the teaching of the universal Church (which always involves the supreme *magisterium* of the Pope and belief in the unity of the Church), he does not merely relay the teaching of the universal Church or of the Pope as if he were a loudspeaker, as though his listeners had to direct their attention past the bishop to what was being said elsewhere in the same connection. On the contrary, in the bishop the Church herself continues her authoritative witness to

¹³ Therefore "the Pope cannot be described as an absolute monarch, even with regard to Church affairs." From a collective statement of the German bishops in 1875 which was expressly and solemnly approved by Pius IX. Cited with a German translation of this approbation in J. Neuner and H. Roos, *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung*, 5th ed., Regensburg (1958), no. 388a. The complete text in *Katholik*, new series, vol. 33 (1875), pp. 209-13.

revealed truth.¹⁴ The case of the powers of order and jurisdiction is similar.

4. *The Episcopate and Charismata*

The sense of this expression (and by the same token the limits of the concept of the Church's "monarchical" constitution) will perhaps become clearer if we consider the following. In the decision of any civil servant it is but the initiative of his superior that is expressed. He may and indeed should show some initiative in preparing this decision, but the content of it is wholly derived from the authority and resolve of his superior, so that whatever occurs in his decision was already "present" in his superior. Now, a bishop's decisions are not of this kind. We have already pointed out elsewhere¹⁵ that there is a "charismatic" structure in the Church besides the hierarchical, that is, that in the constitution of the Church the Spirit as Lord of the Church reserves to himself the power and the right to impart impulses to the Church without always and everywhere directing them through the official hierarchical organs of the Church. The same thing can expressly be said about the relation between the hierarchical

¹⁴ Cf. D. Palmieri, *Tractatus de Romano Pontifice*, 2nd ed., Prati (1891), pp. 666ff. The bishops are "magistri authentici verique iudices, etsi non supremi, in causis fidei et cum singuli in suis sedibus docent, praesumendum est iudice, doctrinam eorum esse catholicam . . ." For example, when a bishop proscribes the teaching of a particular book (CIC, can. 1395, no. 1.), he thereby performs an act of the *magisterium* which by the nature of the case is not just a repetition of what has always and everywhere been said.

¹⁵ *Das Dynamische in der Kirche*, 2nd ed., Freiburg (1958). (English translation in preparation.)

organs themselves, that is, between the Papacy and the bishops. Because the bishops embody the universal Church "on the spot," and insofar as they do so, being the direct representatives of Christ himself and not simply of the Pope, they are indeed always dependent on, and responsible to, that unity of the Church in her diffusion which is embodied by the Pope, and hence are subject to him; they must preserve "peace and communion" with the Apostolic See. But it does not follow that they are executors of the papal will alone. For they are also hierarchical channels for the impulses of the Holy Spirit, who in the first place accomplishes through them what he wishes done at this particular place in the Church, and furthermore possibly some new insight, a new vitality, new modes of Christian life, private or public, that he wishes to impart via this point to the Church as a whole.

In his initiative, subject to the immediate guidance of the Spirit of God, the individual bishop must always assure himself of permanent unity and of the assent, at least tacitly given, of the universal Church and the Pope. But he is not simply carrying out impulses which emanate from the highest echelon of the Church. Just as he is of divine right, to the extent that he shares in the divine right of the episcopate (even though he as an individual is appointed by the Pope), so he is an official organ of such immediate guidance by the Holy Spirit. The approbation of the Pope, and thus of the whole Church, is a criterion of his being and remaining a docile organ of this immediate guidance by the Holy Spirit.

But this does not mean that his initiative is confined to carrying out an impulse received from the supreme human government of the Church. The Pope must also exercise a continuous, official and normal authority over the individual

bishop, since the bishop's Church is also a member and a part—though more than this—of the universal Church. To this extent the individual bishop is *also* an executive organ of the papal power. But since his bishop's Church is *the* Church, in that mysterious presence of the whole in the part, which is found only in the Church, impulses from above can directly manifest Christian and ecclesiastical life in him, and through him and his Church to the whole Church. These may be impulses which have not been transmitted through official channels from the higher reaches of the Hierarchy.

In the openness to such impulses, to which the bishop (as opposed to the charismatic layman) is obliged by reason of his office, there is dignity and an obligation which make him even "subjectively" more than a mere official of the Pope. This immediate contact of the episcopate with God and his government, in the midst of its "ordinary" dependence on the Papacy, may seem complicated, may elude a neat juridical formulation and a clear-cut demarcation of the respective powers of pope and bishop. But this very complexity, these imponderables in the delimitation of the two powers, are grounded in the unique essence of the Church. The Church's own nature shows that the problem of the inalienable powers of the bishops cannot possibly be solved by singling out certain powers and privileges of the bishops over which the Pope has no control, as every sort of Gallicanism and Febronianism has always tried to do. The bishop has his most fundamental powers because *the* Church in its actuality appears in him and in his Church; and these same powers of *the* Church are fully vested in the person of the Pope for the whole Church.

But the very fact that powers and privileges cannot be

divided up between pope and bishop (in the sense of the Pope's influence on the bishop having a legally determinable limit) does not mean that the bishop is only an executive official of the Pope; and this for the very same reason that the bishop is subject to the Pope. Ultimately he is subject to him not because the bishopric represents a small administrative sector of the universal Church, which the bishop administers merely in the name of the universal Church, but because the universal Church is manifest in his diocese. This makes him at once subordinate and independent. Therefore the bishop, too, has a responsibility for the whole Church. Not in the sense that he directly governs her, something which is reserved to the Pope alone, but in the sense that he remains at the disposal of the universal Church and of God in such a way that whatever happens in his diocese happens in "communion" with the universal Church, and at the same time happens in such a way that it can be a point of departure from which God's impulse can spread into the universal Church.

As a matter of fact, this has always been so in the history of the Church. If an Athanasius, an Ambrose, an Augustine, a Ketteler (as the pioneer of the Church's modern social teaching), a Cardinal Suhard and many others were not only good bishops of their own dioceses, but signified something irreplaceable for the whole Church, then this greater significance was not theirs as merely private persons (as great theologians, for example) but was essentially based on their quality as bishops. They could never have done what they did, if they had not been bishops; and what they did it was for them to do because they were bishops. The charismatic function of the individual bishops for the universal Church

does not detract from the dignity and importance of the Papacy. For there have also been many popes in whom office and charismatic mission were united to the blessing of the Church. Only a dictator, not a pope, could see in the free *charismata* in the Church, in the breathing of the Holy Spirit where he will, anything to depreciate, to question or to threaten his permanent office. This is especially true where a charismatic bishop feeds his flock in the name of Christ under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the popes have constantly emphasized that the *solidus vigor* of the bishops is their honour.¹⁶ This is especially true of that power and vitality which God's Spirit himself grants to the bishops.

Since the Pope has the fullness of power, and since any particular jurisdictional power of an individual bishop can, in a given case, be withdrawn by the Pope for good cause (or its exercise forbidden)—even though the episcopate as such must, as divinely instituted, remain intact—the respective spheres of papal and episcopal authority cannot be sharply delimited, and this very fact makes possible a *human* canon law, its development and modification in accordance with developments in the actual distribution of duties and ordinary powers between the two authorities; whilst the “right” delimitation of these powers (through positive human canon law), that is, appropriate to the matter, to the times and to the intellectual climate, is a process not always to be regulated by fixed constitutional norms. Therefore there is no *legal* tribunal which can ensure that the actual relation between primacy and episcopate, in the canonical delimitation of their respective competences, is proper and objective. Only the influence of the Holy Spirit can continuously assure

¹⁶ DB, 1828, where the Vatican Council quotes Gregory the Great.

that the practical balance in positive canon law and in the concrete administration of this law is effected in the manner most beneficial to the Church.

If we consider the relation between the two powers from a purely *legal* point of view, then, there is no provision which would effectually prevent the Pope so concentrating all power in himself as to leave an episcopate of divine right in name only. For, according to what has been said above, we cannot single out any one power which the Pope cannot or may not assume for himself; there is no tribunal on earth which as the Pope's superior could declare such action illicit, for the decisions of the Apostolic See are irreformable by any authority. The Pope's is the supreme and final jurisdiction, and there is not and cannot be (because of the promised assistance of the Spirit) any ultimate right of resistance, which in practice would dissolve the Church. The continual assistance of the Spirit is the only, the final and decisive guarantee for the Catholic, that on the whole the properly balanced relationship of a practical kind subsists between the two powers, that according to the exigencies of each successive age neither exaggerated centralization nor episcopal disintegration will prevail over the unity of the Church.

Since the solemn definition of the papal primacy there remains practically only one danger, which is the danger of over-centralization in the Church. It was given legal footing and opportunity by the Vatican Council while the decentralizing tendencies operate only through facts and habits.

Hence the ultimate bulwark against this danger can be found only in confidence in the assistance of the Spirit of the Church, which is not legally guaranteed. The Spirit of God is the final guarantee that the episcopate shall retain that

scope which, by divine right, it must enjoy. But that is true everywhere: freedom is only where the Spirit is. The field of his free action can indeed be translated into legal norms, but in the last analysis he himself must protect these norms. This shows why the Church cannot have an adequate constitution. Part of herself is the Spirit who alone can guarantee the unity of the Church by the existence of two powers, one of which cannot be adequately reduced to the other in such a way that the Church could really be called a kind of absolute monarchy.

2

The Parish Priest

BEFORE WE START TALKING, and waves of proposals, theories, recommendations and other necessary evils start breaking over us as they so often have before, it will be well to be quiet for a while; to ask God, in silent prayer, for his blessing, here at the very outset of our efforts to take counsel with our own bafflement, and for the breath of his Holy Spirit to blow, beyond all our hopes and expectations, through the aridity of our formulas.

But this hour of prayer must itself be subject to the law of our human condition, the law that strength lies in powerlessness and wisdom in foolishness; the law, that is, that commands us to stammer our human words about God, to strive even though there is no hope for our strivings. And so that this may be so, so that no flesh may have room to boast before God, this silent hour of prayer is itself to begin with a few miserable words, such as are commonly called points for meditation. Otherwise it might seem as if, though our deliberations cannot, yet our prayer can be a form of righteousness before God proceeding from our own works.

What, in God's eyes, is a parish priest? This is what we are going to ask ourselves, here before God, so that we can beg him to let us become, by his grace, that which we are. I suggest that a parish priest is a priest tied to a locality. I know that this is not a definition, because it is not exact either canonically, theologically or logically. But this does not matter, for it may nevertheless suffice for the only purpose that concerns us here: our prayer that God may raise up many parish priests after his own heart.

1. *A Parish Priest Is a Priest*

It is perhaps clearer in the case of a parish priest than of any other variety of the clergy that if he wants to fulfil his vocation he must be indeed a *priest*. Priests are sometimes lecturers too, or officials in ecclesiastical administration, or politicians, scholars, writers, ascetics or many other things besides. They may be all this to such a point that other people—or even they themselves—may come to ignore the priest in them without their immediately having to cease being able to regard themselves as competent lecturers, chancery officials, scholars, writers etc. But if a parish priest stops being in a genuine and living sense a priest, it is all over, from that same moment and to that same extent, with his existence as a pastor. A parish priest is simply and utterly a priest and nothing else.

But what is a priest? So many things seem to belong here that it is hard to trace the main lines, to pick out the unifying bond in all that he does and leaves undone. Is he the cult-man, the one who handles the mysteries, who serves in the sanctuary, set apart from the profane traffic and daily life of the throng; a man remote from this world who, absorbed

in God, robed in sacred vestments, has the task of bearing in himself the aloneness of God; a leader of wayfarers journeying out of the desert of this world into the holy land of God's promise? Or is he God's ambassador: a man who, coming forth from God, goes out into the world; whose voice is to be heard on all sides, judging, convincing, pulling down, building up; God's herald even in the very marketplace, a messenger and witness with an almost indecent sense of mission as, in season and out of season, he confronts and disquiets the consciences of men? A man who feels himself responsible for all men; never ceasing to teach "both publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20.20), never ceasing to proclaim moral imperatives, norms of conduct, practical plans of action to transform the world itself, and its whole round of "profane" daily life, into the Kingdom of God; a leader of those who join in carrying out Christ's descent from heaven to earth, a leader in a campaign which sees this earth as the Promised Land, awaiting consummation? Is the priest a sacrificing priest or a pastoral priest, a man with a cult or a man with a mission, a "mystic" or a prophet?

Do not let us be too quick with a "both—and"! An over-hasty "both," simply putting them alongside each other, does not give us the interior unity of the two things; it does not get down to the single common root, and hence never, even in practice, gets beyond a vacillating, unstable compromise of "doing this and not leaving that undone." The task remains, recurring day by day within the narrow and cramping pressures of daily life, the difficult, only barely achievable task of being both. But it is impossible really and genuinely to live both if we fail to recognize, and to take interior living possession of, that one reality which is the source of both.

The priest is both—sacrificer and pastor, cult-man and

apostle, mystic and prophet—because Christ, who is one, wills to live on in him and in what he does. But Christ is:

(1) The grace of God made flesh, made visible, made historical, made spatio-temporally tangible, a reality to which belongs

(2) The word, and in which

(3) The whole world is, in principle, comprehended and consecrated.

Christianity is first and last Christ himself. It is not, ultimately, a collection of doctrines and laws, dogmas and regulations, but a reality which is there, and which is present in our lives ever anew: Christ and his grace, the reality of God, which, in Christ, becomes our own reality. And this divine Christ-reality is not something mystically or metaphysically incomprehensible, not something that has to be grasped in a mystical, gnostic, idealist soaring of the spirit above this world, not a leaving-behind of the sphere that is "natural" to us, meaning spatio-temporal, tangible life; it comes to us in an earthly place at an earthly time. For Christ is God's will for our salvation made historical, made flesh; God's personal, loving will does not encounter man in some unattainable, intangible "inner realm"; since Christ, since the One who became man, all grace is Christ's grace, grace with a body, grace dependent on the historical event that at one particular space-time point in our human history the Word became man and was crucified and rose again. It is from this point, not from that non-historical Beyond which is proper to God, that all grace reaches us; it encounters us as a wave spreading out from that point, reaching us through the medium of humanity's single, visible, tangible history. All grace is, in this sense, always "sacramental," incarnate grace.

But an essential constituent of this visibility of Christ's grace is the word. There is a double reason for this: it is because this is the visibility of a supernatural, i.e., divine, reality within this world, and because this reality aims at being the salvation of spiritual persons. The saving presence of God in the flesh, i.e., within human history, is a presence *by signs* (otherwise we should be walking by sight, not by faith); it is a sign which makes possible the presence to us of what, being divine, transcends human experience. And the human word is an indispensable element of such signs, because it alone can join with any other reality within this world—human beings, water, bread, gestures etc.—to make a sign of that God who is present though hidden, who is real, who is effectually at work. Thus Christ himself is only present to us because and insofar as he reveals himself in the word that bears witness to him; it is his word, proclaiming his reality, which makes him present for us, because we cannot establish what he is in any way except by that reality's disclosing itself to us in words. Hence the word is, for us, a constitutive element of the saving reality of Christ.

Now if on the one hand Christianity is not fundamentally and primarily a statement of truths as true propositions but the event of the incarnate, crucified and risen Son of the Father, and if on the other hand the word is an integral element in this primary reality regarded as a saving reality for us within our sphere of existence, then this means that the word, in its primary Christian usage, is sacramental; not a word "about" something, but the sign under which God's saving will in Christ makes itself present for us within our history. And it is thus—i.e., as coming to us in the word—that this saving reality can address itself to spiritual persons,

calling on them for the free obedience of faith and the trusting surrender of love; it is thus that it is, for us, a reality which is not simply there in the sense that things are there, making us aware of their presence by the fact that we bump into them whether we want to or not; the reality of Christian salvation, being essentially something that is present to us in the word, calls on us for a free, personal assent.

It is a reality for us and in us, giving us its blessings, gracing us in our free assent to it, just insofar as we not only undergo it but act it ourselves as well, with God. Christ becomes our life only when we are doing that which is done to us; when that word which blesses us with the tidings of his life, that word by which he himself enters into our life, is spoken by us too, with him, testifying to our faith and our love; when the primary sacramental word of Christianity becomes, simultaneously, the primary word of our co-operative fulfilment of this Christ-reality.

Further, the saving reality of Christ is the consecration, in principle, of the whole creation. If anything was not assumed, neither was it redeemed; but whatever has been united with God has also been saved, says Gregory Nazianzen. But everything has been assumed, for Christ is true man, true son of Adam, truly lived a human life in all its breadth and height and depth, has truly become a star of this cosmos in which everything depends on everything else, a flower of this earth which we love. And hence everything, without confusion and without separation, is to enter into eternal life; there is to be not only a new heaven but a new earth. Nothing, unless it be eternally damned, can remain outside the blessing, the protection, the transfiguration of this divinization of the world which, beginning in Christ, aims at drawing every-

thing that exists into the life of God himself, precisely in order that it may thus have eternal validity conferred upon it.

This is the reality of Christ, which constitutes Christianity; the incarnate life of God in our place and our time. A reality to which belongs the word; a reality in which all human reality is called to God and blessed.

The priest is a man through whom this reality of Christ is to remain present in every place and at every time until Christ comes again and the glory of God, then made manifest, will no longer have any need of human word or earthly sign. But this means that the priest is essentially sacrificer and pastor, cult-man and apostle, mystic and prophet in one.

He is a "priest" in the sense which we primarily associate with the word: the one who sacrifices, consecrates, blesses, communicates grace: steward and dispenser of the mysteries of God.

He stands first and foremost at the altar and wherever else sacramental events take place, for he has authority to make continually sacramentally present the historical saving act of Christ in its double aspect: atonement to God and bestowal of grace upon man. He is the man through whom the reality of Christ works upon us. The first word that he speaks, the primal utterance that proclaims and reveals what he is, is not the word of teaching, still less a voice in the streets, but the word that is spoken in sacrifice at the altar and in the sacraments. The priest is not first and foremost a theologian, one who knows something about the mysteries of God, but precisely a priest, one who gives present existence to those mysteries in every place and time where we are; acting, not reflecting; blessing and consecrating, not instructing and proclaiming. Only when a priest—and hence a parish priest—

knows that his liturgical action is the beginning and end of what he is called to do, only when every step he takes proceeds from the altar and goes back to the altar, only when all his words are a prelude to and an echo of his sacramental words, is he truly a priest and a pastor; only then will all that he does remain priestly.

The beginning and end of existence as a priest is, then, the duty and authority to make present, here and now, the mysteries of Christ as the glory of God in the world and the salvation of men. But precisely because of this and deriving from this the priest is an apostle, an envoy, a witness, a teacher, a shepherd; one who comes down from the altar and goes out into the world to proclaim the message, to work and fight, in season and out of season, for the Kingdom of God; one who strives to subdue this earth to the reign of God. The first and last thing he does is the making present of the mystery of Christ in sacrifice and sacrament; the first and last word he speaks is the sacramental word. But precisely because of this, what he says must go beyond the actual sacramental word. Christian preaching, i.e., the Christian word, whenever it is not in the strict sense *forma sacramenti*, is in itself nothing other than a preparation for and further exposition of the strictly sacramental word and sustained by it. It is a teaching of the nations so that they may be baptized, a teaching of the content of God's commandments so that their baptismal life may remain living and bear the fruits of the Spirit.

The man who speaks the word that sacrifices the Lamb of God on the altar must also cry aloud to the world: "Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi!" The hallowing, life-giving sacramental word, spoken over men, is effectual only if, while testifying to God's saving will, it also testifies to the

acceptance of that will, in faith, by the man to whom salvation comes. Thus he who speaks that word is speaking it rightly only if he helps the recipient, by testimony and teaching and exhortation, to a really believing assent to its being spoken over him. He who changes the bread and wine of this earth into the visibility of the crucified and risen Christ thereby accepts the duty of working and fighting for this earth and its people to be taken into God's possession, to be drawn into God by consecration so as to become the reflection of his invisible glory.

The man who makes the love of God present in this world cannot remain silent concerning the gigantic seriousness of the task that lies upon us by reason of God's desire to love us; he is bound to tell men that God desires to come into their lives. Since through the priest the Kingdom of God is present, the priest must preach: Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. Just as Christ had to give testimony of what he was, just as that word was a very part of himself, so the priest must give testimony of that which through him and his actions is here and now made present.

It is not that the man who performs the cult just happens to be a pastor of souls as well. He is a pastor of souls *because* he performs the cult, because it is by human speech that he performs it, by the word; a word that must be unfolded and explained and defended; that must be accepted in faith. He is a pastor of souls because he is the man who makes present the reality of Christ, which is the beginning of the transfiguration of the world, a leaven to make the whole of creation into that bread which, by the consecration of world history, is to become for all eternity the sacred sign that God is all in all.

If the priest as cult-man surrenders his burning concern for the salvation of souls, if he chooses not to be a pastor of souls any more, if he withdraws to the altar (or rather, into the sacristy), if he no longer chooses to be an apostle, then what he has done is not simply to betray some second, additional task; what he has done is to cease to be a cult-man of Christ. In all the innumerable details over each whole area of human life—marriage, the family, law, politics, commerce, art, science—it is always going to be the layman who has, as a Christian, the task of making each of these fields into a province of the Kingdom of God. Clericalism, i.e., any sort or degree of ecclesiastical state-socialism, is something that we must always hold in horror. But, precisely because he is the man who performs the cult, the priest can never (and today least of all, with the task seeming so difficult and indeed almost hopeless) abandon what is his duty: that this earth should become totally redeemed, sanctified, justified—the Kingdom of God.

We can say even more: However much it is the authority and the duties that he has in liturgical matters that are the beginning and end for the priest, it is nevertheless what arises from these—the apostolic, prophetic, pastoral aspect of his vocation—that is the existentially determining factor in his life; the thing that sets a special stamp upon his Christian life, differentiating it essentially from the Christian life of a layman. For when by the assent of his own life he enters personally into what he does liturgically in the narrow sense of the word, he is merely contributing that active appropriation, that personal realization of the sacramental cult action, which lies within the competence and the vocation of every single Christian. But when he commits his whole life to

proclaiming the gospel of Christ, because it is the good news of that reality which he makes present to men in cult and sacrament, then he is carrying out a task which is his not merely as a man and a Christian. Then he is really an apostle, i.e., one who is sent; one who must go out from the familiar ground of his own life, bearing his own life with him; who has to penetrate into places where he does not really feel at home, to "inflict himself" on people who have made no request for him to come to them, to say things which find no real answering resonance in his own life, nor ultimately (despite whatever efforts he must and does make) any convincing testimony in it.

It is this situation as an apostle which really sets the stamp on a priest's life, it is here that we find the special character of his vocation and of the ethic that belongs to it. Hence it is surely not by chance that New Testament usage never designates the priest's office in terms of the language of cult but always that of apostolic and pastoral work. Christ, and Christians in general, are called priests in the New Testament, but "priests" are called servants, those who preside, overseers, elders, apostles, prophets etc. Nor is it chance that whenever the New Testament treats of the ethic of the priesthood, its point of departure is always the apostolate in the narrower sense, never cult and sacrament.

A priest, then, is both a sacrificing priest and a pastoral priest in an interior, radical unity which involves both tasks in such fashion that neither can be truly fulfilled except in a mutual interpenetration. And this is because Christ, whom the priest makes present in his own time, was both in indissoluble unity: priest and prophet, sacrament and word. A parish priest is just simply and solely a priest, and hence he is

necessarily both, a sacrificing priest and a pastoral priest, cult-man and apostle.

2. *A Priest Tied to a Locality*

By divine institution, the Church of Christ does not only have a supreme central authority extending to all Christians but is also, by that same divine law, organized in the territorial episcopate. The shape of the earth structures the Kingdom of Heaven. The Church establishes an order for the people of the Church by dividing and organizing the land in which they live; the normal pattern is not of personal episcopal jurisdiction or personal parishes, but local sees and local parishes. When the Church looks at a man she always sees him together with the place where he lives, limited, formed and protected by it, and hence it is at this point that she takes hold on his life. This fundamental earth-bound characteristic of the Church, by which she lovingly embraces the particular qualities of space, with the times and the men belonging to it, and all their special qualities and history, so as to take them into the Kingdom of God, which is to be truly heavenly and yet at the same time truly earthly, without confusion or separation, like the divine and human in Christ himself—this fundamental characteristic, which is of divine right in the episcopal structure of the Church, is represented and actualized by a parish priest in his own way too. He too has received as his lot a piece of this poor earth which is to become the Kingdom of God. He is to take root in it, to display its characteristics in himself, to share its life and its earthly destiny for better or for worse. This is the Lord's portion over which he has been set; here, in this bit of land

that he can walk round, with its people that he can count, he is to live as ruler and servant, as priest and apostle. His life and work are the expression not so much of the fact that the Church, in the restless unquiet of the Holy Spirit, is forever going out to new peoples and desiring to conquer new territories, as of the fact that when the Kingdom of God makes conquests it is also really in order to possess them; when it rescues, it is in order to guard and keep for ever; when it converts, it is in order that a new life shall really grow and bloom lastingly upon this earth. He is not of those who are, so to say, hounded from place to place, envoys driven by the Spirit on a particular, limited mission that takes them restlessly through the world; he represents the Catholic Church in a particular place, a particular community.

We are all limited and no one is everything in one. The man whose pastoral work is extra-parochial, the wandering apostle, as we find him already in the *Didache* along with the local clergy, must pay for his unlimited territorial scope by accepting a certain limitation of content in his task and his mission. The territorial limitation of the parish priest, on the other hand, confers on him the obligation and opportunity to open wide his whole mind and heart and work to all the breadth and depth of Christian life in his parish. He may not, really, be a specialist; he has got to be to a great extent a general practitioner. He is the father of his parish, and hence responsible for the supernatural life of his parish in all directions: he is the one who performs its cult and intercedes for it in prayer, he is its pastor, preacher and shepherd, its doctor and helper in all the needs and tasks of the whole of its Christian life, and this for great and small alike, for poor and rich, for educated and uneducated, and for all sorts

and conditions of men. For all of them he must create and make visible a single, communal place which is their heavenly home on this earth: our Father's house on one particular spot of earth, so that man's earthly home may be consecrated and transfigured into that home of the soul in which eternal life can be born and develop and come to maturity. And especially so today. In former times it may have had to be the pastor's chief concern to see that men, all rooted and settled and at home on this earth, did not forget the heavenly unrest of the Holy Spirit; did not lose consciousness that, however rooted they might be in one bit of soil, one stock, one earthly task, they were nevertheless strangers and pilgrims towards eternity. Today, when earth is shaken by a demonic unrest, robbing men of their sense of being protected by their earthly home, it is almost more the pastor's task to see that the man of today, given no peace as he is driven hither and thither in his unrest and homelessness, shall at least in his parish be given, from heaven, something of a home.

This, then, is the parish priest, or rather at least something of what he is: a priest of Christ and therefore both cult-man and pastor of souls in an indissoluble *perichoresis* of the powers and tasks of both: a priest in one particular place on the earth, so that here in this place the Kingdom of God may be fully present as the home of souls.

3

Deacons

Renewal of the Diaconate:

Preliminary Dogmatic Considerations

THE QUESTION OF RENEWING the sacramental diaconate in a manner suitable to our times is under discussion at the moment: both this fact and the general scope of the question are generally known.¹ The object here is not to recapitulate all that has been said on the subject, but simply to put forward a few theses which would seem to be useful as preliminaries if the question of renewing the diaconate is to be put in proper focus. As to what follows for the question itself from these dogmatic considerations, we shall leave that entirely open. These theses are offered here without the proper theological foundation for which, in some cases, they call, but

¹ References to German writing on the subject can be found, e.g., in J. Hornef's little essay, "Auf dem Wege zur Wiedergeburt des Diakonats," in *Die Besinnung*, 11 (1956), pp. 48-53, or the same author's "Liturgie und Wiedererweckung des Diakonats," in *Liturgie und Mönchtum*, 3rd series, vol. 16, pp. 35-45.

since the only object was to lay down the general framework of sacramental theology within which this question of renewing the diaconate needs to be set if it is to be treated adequately, it seemed permissible to dispense with this foundation to a great extent. Those familiar with current theological discussion concerning the sacraments will, nevertheless, be able to evaluate these theses correctly; partly as truisms and partly as hypotheses that need to be taken into account if we are to get a clear picture of this question, which is not the direct object of discussion here: the possibility of giving to the diaconate conferred by sacramental rite in the Church an interpretation which will make it not a mere "stage" towards the priesthood (as far as its practical meaning goes) but a genuine, permanent office in the Church.

(1) There is in the Church a sacrament of leadership. That is, there is a ritual procedure for conferring office in the Church, which is a sacrament, i.e., it confers both the power of office and a claim to the corresponding grace for rightly carrying out that office. Hence office itself is marked by a certain "enthusiastic" character; that is to say, the Church is quite clear that office cannot be rightly exercised except in the *pneuma*, and equally clear that God will never allow office in this holy Church of his—the Church of the Last Times, the presence of the victorious grace of God in the world—to fall away completely from this pneumatic power. Yet there are too, and must always be, free charisms which do not belong to any permanently exercised office and which cannot and should not be seen as interchangeable with office. Thus there are two dangers to be equally avoided: suppression by the man who holds office of the breath and impulse of the free *pneuma* in the Church, and, on the part

of the pneumatic man, either a contempt for office or a desire to be always and invariably given recognition by the Church's conferring office upon him.

(2) For a wide range of reasons, it is dogmatically possible and historically compulsory to say that the Church can exercise her sacramental transmission of office in such a way that on the one hand only certain particular powers need be conferred on an individual at any one time—not, that is, always necessarily the total transmissible authority—while, on the other hand, this rite of partial transmission of office still remains a sacrament. The institution by Christ of the various levels of office and of the corresponding sacramental rites by which they are conferred is to be conceived of, accordingly, in the following form: Christ confers office upon his Church. It is for the Church to determine the legitimate form of the sacred rite by which that office is transmitted (to such an extent that the valid conferring of office depends on what she determines); when she does so, it then follows from the nature of the Church and of the office of leadership within her that this rite will be (or can be) *eo ipso* a sacrament, and is hence to be regarded as having been instituted by Christ, who instituted the Church; and this even if office is only transmitted in a restricted form. Similarly, an office which is to be regarded as, in this sense, a partial embodiment of the fullness of authority established in the Church permanently, *iure divino*, by Christ, can be seen as instituted *iure divino* by Christ, even though the division into separate offices was made by the Church acting in the authority of Christ, not by Christ himself in his own lifetime.

Various historical and dogmatic considerations can be adduced which point towards this position:

(a) No historical proof is forthcoming that Christ himself, in his own lifetime, made any explicit distinction between different grades of authority or appointed any special sacramental rite for such grades.

(b) The account in the Acts of the Apostles of the establishment and ordination of the Seven strongly suggests the opposite.

(c) *A priori*, one would expect the Church to have this kind of authority. In any society, office is of its nature something divisible, to be allocated according to the demands of time and circumstance. This simply arises from the nature of the case. Hence, failing proof to the contrary, one would presume the application of this to the "perfect society" of the Church.

(d) Much of medieval theology was quite uninhibitedly ready to regard even minor orders as sacramental in character. This view, which was held by Thomas Aquinas, is still tenable today. If it is correct, this can only be on the basis of the thesis propounded above. For minor orders, and the subdiaconate, certainly did not exist, as such, from the beginning; nor is there any proof that St. Thomas's view rests on some historical error of his time to the effect that they did so exist.

(e) It is difficult to establish historically with sufficient probability that the distinction between the episcopal and presbyteral offices is *iuris divini* in the sense that the practical division of authority in the Church between bishops and priests must have been made by Christ himself and not by the Church. One point that immediately tells against it is that there is no absolute theological certainty, even today, that episcopal consecration is a sacrament rather than a sacra-

mental. Further, the witness of Scripture does not make it entirely clear whether each community in the primitive Church was ruled by a monarchical bishop or a college of presbyters. All that was defined at the Council of Trent was that the Hierarchy as a whole exists in the Church *ordinatione divina* and that bishops have, *de facto*, more authority (jurisdictional and sacramental) than priests and deacons. (DB, 960, 966, 967.) This practical distinction between bishops and priests, even in respect of their sacramental powers, can perfectly well be explained even without any explicit division by Christ himself between the two offices or the transmission of them. For there is no fundamental difficulty in supposing, either that the sacramental rite is divided to correspond to the division in the power of office that it confers (making the episcopate a sacrament as well), or that the *potestas ordinis*, sacramentally conferred in its entirety upon the priest (as distinct from the bishop), is restricted by an act of the Church in such a way that the exercise of such powers (though given in themselves) would be, for a simple priest, not only illicit but even invalid. There is much that tells in favour of this solution (jurisdiction needed for absolution; the simple priest's power to confirm; the likelihood that the power to ordain was conferred on simple priests here and there in the Middle Ages).

(f) There are, no doubt, analogous cases of Christ's having instituted a sacrament in the way that we have supposed here (marriage, confirmation, last anointing etc.): i.e., that Christ established a sacrament by establishing the Church, who is of her very nature the effective historical sign of God's grace in the world, so that those acts which are fundamental to her, belonging to her very nature, are sacraments, without its

being necessary in every case to have an explicit statement to this effect made in advance.²

(3) This is not to say that every office in the Church is necessarily bound to be a portion of the office which Christ established as an essential of his Church. The fact that medieval theology to a large extent thought of the lower degrees of ecclesiastical office as being sacramentally conferred shows that we can be very uninhibited about this. But we can nevertheless state the principle, without prejudice to our second thesis, that it is not necessary for every office in the Church to be a partial sharing in the hierarchical office of Christ and so to come under what we have been saying of such participations. There may be offices the need for which simply arises out of some particular situation in the Church, and which consequently are not, even in a partial way, essential embodiments and basic functions of the Church and her task (e.g., a mere ecclesiastical tax-collector).

(4) Even when a particular office does have to be understood as a partial sharing in the Church's hierarchical office as such, it does not seem to follow that the conferring of this office must always be sacramental in nature, though it remains true that it may be. If the theory suggested under (2) (e), to explain how a simple priest has power to confirm, is not accepted (as it still will not be by the majority of theologians today), then it cannot be disputed that even a sacramental power can be conferred without the conferment's being *eo ipso* a sacrament. Papal primacy of jurisdiction is also *iuris divini*, but is not (at least according to the general view) conferred by a sacramental rite. Whether such a conferring

² Cf. K. Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, London (1963).

of office is sacramental in nature or not will depend on various factors: first, on the Church's intention; secondly, on whether the general conditions for a sacrament are fulfilled (it cannot be said that the conditions for the valid transmission of office and those for the existence of a sacrament must necessarily be identical); and finally, on whether the Church means to confer this office definitively and irrevocably. For it seems to be according to the sense of the Church's belief that an actual sacrament of state is, in principle, irrevocable. Cf. the doctrine of sacramental character, and the proposition in *DB*, 960: "*Merito sancta synodus damnat sententiam . . . semel rite ordinatos iterum laicos effici posse.*" Though this statement is made primarily of priests, its conceptual background seems to be something of wider application: that sacramental ordinations, as against temporary appointments to an office, are final.

(5) From our second thesis it would follow that the delimitation of the various offices, even when sacramentally transmitted, can vary at different periods in the Church, given that what is conferred is at least some degree of participation in the Church's fundamental hierarchical office (third thesis). Hence it would seem to be idle in the extreme, both historically and most of all dogmatically, to dispute over what was the actual content of the office of the Seven and that of the diaconate in the primitive Church; to try to decide whether these were identical, as is commonly held amongst Catholics, or two distinct offices, as is supposed by, e.g., Paul Gaechter.⁸ Even if we suppose that he is right about this, tradition would still be equally right in referring the dog-

⁸ Cf. P. Gaechter, *Petrus und seine Zeit*, Innsbruck (1958), pp. 105-54.

matic foundation for the diaconate in the early Church to the ordination of the Seven, insofar as the latter would still be an example of the Church's being able to divide up her one single office, so that she can in fact institute deacons, for instance, and confer their limited office upon them by a sacramental rite. Even if the point just made is correct, this would not exclude the possibility that the word "diaconate," as used in the Church today or as it might be used in a revived form of the office, may well, or might well, comprise all those functions which, while on the one hand a true participation in the Church's hierarchical office, are on the other hand subordinate to the tasks allotted to priest and bishop, and involve a more limited participation in the Church's office than they. To this extent, the difference of opinion between Kramer and Hornef does not seem to me to be very important.⁴ It is certainly possible for an office to be conferred in wider measure than is ever exercised *de facto* by a particular holder of it (cf. the suffragan bishop, the priest-monk etc.). Hence there would be nothing impossible about having deacons for preaching and teaching and deacons for the service of charity (that is, with these as emphases chosen *de facto* within one diaconate which would, *de iure*, confer the power for both).

(6) If an office really forms part of the Church's task and her vital functioning, then whenever it is held and exercised in the right spirit and with the right intention it carries the promise of God's grace, even if it is not conferred by any sacramental rite. This applies equally to whatever forms of

⁴ I mean the question of whether the appointment of the (future) deacon would be only for the supervision of works of charity or essentially for the preaching of the word as well.

participation may be conferred non-sacramentally, in some cases, in that office which is constitutive of the Church, and to such other offices as do not qualify for sacramental transmission at all. For given that such offices really are functions of the Church, the promise, made to the Church, of the assistance of the Spirit, must apply concretely to these functions. Hence we must not say, when we find what is in practice a diaconate being exercised in the Church without having been transmitted by any sacramental rite, that what we have here is office without grace, and treat it as an abuse to which we can conveniently attribute anything and everything that may be amiss in the Church. Despite the importance of sacrament as *opus operatum*, even sacramental grace is effective only in the degree to which the offer of it made from God's side is really accepted in willing belief by a selflessly open and loving heart. And, if such are his dispositions, grace is given to a man for whatever task he has in life whether or not it comes to him sacramentally.⁵ Hence it is at least as important for the diaconate in the Church, whether as it already exists for practical purposes or as it may be set up in the future, that the deacon should subjectively, i.e., in faith and love, accept his vocation in heart and spirit and submit himself totally to the law of his office, as that he should receive the grace that he needs for this by means of an actual sacrament. It does nothing whatever to emphasize or enhance the importance of the sacraments to proceed from the assumption, whether explicit or implicit, that the grace which they communicate can only be obtained through them. No apologia for the renewal of the sacramental diaconate should

⁵ Cf. K. Rahner, "Personale und sakramentale Frömmigkeit," in *Schriften zur Theologie*, 2, Einsiedeln (1955), pp. 115-41.

suppress this truth, or relegate it unduly to the fringe of consciousness. The holding of an ecclesiastical office (regardless of how it is imparted) in the holy Church of God's grace is something that always has a quasi-sacramental character, analogous to a sacramental character; that is to say, the very holding of it is always a promise on God's part that he, who wills his Church to be holy and fruitful, will give his grace to the one who holds this office, if he will only accept it and make it fruitful.

(7) Nevertheless, a renewal of the diaconate in the Church is extremely desirable and urgent. There is no need for us here to go into the reasons for this at length: they have already been well and exhaustively stated by others.

(a) The Church has functions which cannot in practice, especially in our present situation, be carried out intensively enough by priests, but which are nevertheless permanent elements within that office which is of the Church's essence.

(b) Both tradition⁶ and Scripture show that the diaconate is not in fact a mere preliminary stage before priestly ordination, with its function sufficiently exercised by being an introduction to the priesthood. The diaconate is an office in itself, a share in the one single *ordo*, and it can and should represent a permanent, lifelong task for a man.

(c) Any man of insight engaged in pastoral and theological questions realizes that it is urgently necessary that such offices should exist (and indeed to a large extent already do exist) in the Church today. Only if they can be recognized and respected by all in such a way that those who hold them are regarded not as secondary employees of the clergy but as

⁶ Cf. W. Croce, "Die niederen Weihen und ihre hierarchische Wertung," in ZKT, 70 (1948), pp. 257-314.

bearers of the Church's sacred function in certain definite areas of her life can we hope that enough men will be forthcoming with the requisite qualities and interior self-commitment for such an office. I have already tried to show in another connection⁷ that those who share in this way in the Church's hierarchical apostolate, exercising part of the function of the Hierarchy's mission, given that they do so on a permanent, full-time basis, are not, to be theologically precise, really laymen, even if they have received no "ordination" in the usual sense. They belong to the clergy. The real significance of their vocation and commissioning for their office (extra-canonical and extra-liturgical though it is) is greater than that of, say, the tonsure, by which a man becomes a cleric.

(8) But this is precisely the reason (supposing the necessary conditions to be fulfilled) for conferring the diaconate by a sacramental action of the Church. (Such conditions would be: The well-tried suitability of the man concerned; a clearer working out than has yet been done, theologically and canonically, of the content, limitations and subdivisions of this office, its obligations and its rights; commitment to the diaconate for life, canonically irrevocable in a way analogous to the priesthood, not only with reference to the abstract doctrine of indelible character.) There is no doubt that it *can* be so conferred. There cannot really, then, be any doubt that it *should* be so conferred. For if there does exist the possibility (indeed the actuality) of such a sacrament, then

⁷ K. Rahner, "Das eigentliche Apostolat des Laien," in *Schriften zur Theologie*, 2, Einsiedeln (1955), pp. 339-73; and "Nochmals: das eigentliche Apostolat des Laien," in *Grosser Entschluss*, 10 (1955), pp. 217-21.

it is *in possessione*; i.e., there is no need to prove that it should, in principle, be administered, but rather why, in the individual case, it may not be opportune to administer it. The point made in the sixth thesis, true and important though it is, cannot be made into an argument in favour of indifference towards any sacrament. If a dying man can no longer swallow, he can truthfully be consoled with the assurance that God's grace can reach him outside the Eucharist. But this is no argument against the importance of viaticum. The same applies to the diaconate, particularly since there is a reciprocal effect between a sacramental rite and that interior receptivity which is a necessary condition if grace for a particular office is to be received whether in or outside a sacrament. This interior receptivity, without which no grace is effective, is often lacking precisely because, when banished from the tangible realm of the Church's bodily life of sacrament and liturgy, it sickens and wastes away.

4

Men in the Church

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY SELF-EVIDENT that there is anything theologically and humanly meaningful to say on the subject of "men in the Church." The great danger is that one will either talk fashionable flummery or else take the battle of the sexes (they still, for all the close bond between them, hate each other whenever unredeemed sexuality becomes explicitly or instinctively articulate) and serve it up once more, this time with theological trimmings. Are we not warned off the theme, right from the start, by the words of Scripture (Gal. 3.27f.): "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ . . . There is neither male nor female"?

Whatever happens, these words of the Apostle mean something of inescapable significance, which nothing said later here on this theme must be allowed to obscure. For these words tell us that in the realm of the truth of the Gospel and the redeeming grace of God neither man nor woman has any priority as far as concerns the eternal salvation of human beings. *In relation to the ultimate question of salvation, to*

the total decision of life, there is no difference between the sexes. In this respect, no one has any advantage by being a man or by being a woman.

But human beings are nevertheless seen by God as men or as women. For it is precisely in relation to God (more than in relation to anyone or anything else) that one is wholly and completely one with all that one is and has. But God created man male and female. (Gen. 1.27.)

The sexual character of human beings is not merely one particular limited sector of their existence, such as would make it relevant to religion only in so far as that sector is subject to particular moral norms. Sexual character governs the being and life of the whole person (though in varying ways and with varying intensities) in all his dimensions. One is a man or a woman in every situation. And because in the religious sphere it is the whole man to whom the summons comes, and who has got to arrive at fulfilment, it cannot but be the case that he has to work out his salvation as that concrete whole which he is; and thus as a man or as a woman. As addressed to men, then, the summons to play the man and "do manfully" in the sphere of religion can represent a Christian demand and a Christian right. (1 Cor. 16.13; cf., in the Septuagint, Ps. 30.25, and 2 Sam. 10.12; 1 Chron. 22.13.) And it being also the case that the Christian religious life of the individual is something to be carried out and fulfilled primarily in the Church, we then arrive at the question of men in the Church.

But this is a difficult theme. For in some ways it is hard to say what a man is; just how he differs from a woman (or a child). And, supposing this first question to have been answered, it is still more difficult to set out what the special

character of a man is in relation to religion and the Church. If one tries to answer this question, one is in constant danger of paying tribute to sexual conceit; of turning the difference between the sexes into a matter of pre-eminence and superior value; of ascribing exclusively to one sex what is to be found in the other as well, even if in a different form. Any such investigation, furthermore, is liable to be under fire from the objections and general touchiness of the other sex, since injured sexual conceit is apt to infer denigration where no more was meant than a simple statement without any implication of inferior value. It is very difficult, in the course of considering what is regarded as masculine, to keep separate what belongs to man by nature, what is merely characterized as masculine in a particular culture or period, what man is meant to be and what he (alas) is, perhaps merely as a matter of fact; and what really is matter of fact from what is wishful thinking, which passes for reality because fantasy is constantly accepted as a substitute for what is out of reach. ✓

Because sex difference runs through every dimension of man's being and life, our theme has precisely the same boundlessness as the quest for humanity itself; it is loaded with the whole of that mystery that imposes itself when a finite being with an eternal destiny begins to reflect upon itself. So, though the theme is a valid one, yet one has little hope of being able to do more than produce a few platitudes on it, or even perhaps inanities. But one must certainly not act as though some question did not exist, merely because it is difficult to answer. Even a bad answer can give a good question a hearing, and perhaps lead to its producing a better answer out of itself. This would make even a bad answer good. And in our case there is at least little danger that a bad

answer will reveal the good question as having been already well answered.

1. *Masculinity in the Christian Message
and in the Church*

If we wanted to treat this question theologically in the strictest and truest sense, we should have to go very far afield. We should have to ask why, in the message of Christianity, God is called "Father" (and not "Mother"). We should have to enquire into the meaning, and the limits of meaning, of this linguistic usage, so as to understand as much as we could how far all fatherhood (and hence all manhood) takes its name (i.e., its innermost essence) from this "Father." (Eph. 3.15.) We should need for this purpose an ontology (which to a large extent still remains to be written) showing how relationships at a lower level of being (biological in this case) can be shadows and likenesses of things prevailing at higher levels, though the concept derived at the lower level can be applied only "analogically" to higher realities. We could go on to ask what significance it has that the eternal Logos of the Father became not woman but man; an obscure question indeed, but one in which we cannot rest content with simply appealing to the arbitrary will of God. We could, again, enquire into the "patriarchal" features manifest in the image of Christianity and the Church as they are in practice, pursuing this right up to the point where this manifestation is of "divine law," unalterable to the end of time: only a man can be a priest and exercise official leadership in the Church, with all the duties and prerogatives (and dangers) that this involves. We could set forth the various utterances of Scrip-

ture in the Old and New Testaments which have something to say on the special character and relationship of the sexes (1 Cor. 11.2-12; Eph. 5.21-33; 1 Cor. 14.34-6; 1 Tim. 2.11-15; 1 Pet. 3.7; Gen. 2.18-25; 3.16 etc.). It will readily be understood that all these questions are far too large and weighty to be given so much as the sketch of an answer here.

2. *A Rough Sketch of Man as Differentiated from Woman*

But so as to have some chance of saying something about our theme, let us take a short cut. Let us take it for granted that the kind of sketch we are about to make excludes any evaluation of superiority or inferiority and sets out to be a purely neutral description; and, further, that everyone is clear about the fact that spiritual, free persons, engaged in the process of embodying moral values, can never in any meaningful sense be merely "masculine" or merely "feminine." Taking all this for granted, we may perhaps venture on a quite rough sketch of man as differentiated from woman, with the idea of drawing some fairly practical conclusions from it about the religious life and conduct of men in the Church and the Church's treatment of them.

Man is the extrovert. He is concerned with achievement rather than with intention. He wants to reach self-realization in a piece of work done. He is orientated towards the matter in hand rather than the person. He is analytical rather than intuitive. He is concerned with principles; he is sensitive to the accusation that he allows "personal" factors to influence his actions. What he wants is to be "fair," and he almost feels that this description is higher praise than if it is said to him

that he is a loving person. He finds it easier than a woman to distinguish between the matter in hand and the person involved (which is not in all respects an advantage). He bears solitude more easily. He is a prophet where woman is a mystic. He organizes and plans, aiming to reduce his conduct to rules and norms. He lives more with his head than with his heart. He gets at odds with himself more easily than a woman, who is readier than he to rest within the circumference of her being.

It is he who opens up far horizons, while woman lays the foundations of the home. He asks for acknowledgement in terms of his work; what he offers is what he has achieved, not his heart. He constructs systems, while woman has imaginative vision. He finds his own stability by giving support. He finds peace by "throwing himself into his work." His concept of service is not that of the handmaid but that of the vassal; he himself becomes a lord while giving service to another, greater Lord, to whom he has bound himself by agreement. Love is a *part* of his life, not the whole. He is ✓ shamefaced and uncertain in his relationship to his feelings. He is capable of despising himself and finds something indecent in taking himself too seriously. The contradiction between intellectual theory and his own inclinations strikes him as normal; he is distrustful of theories of which his feelings approve. He would like his life to harmonize with his theories and, as a necessary consequence, adjusts his general concept of life to his own practice, whereas a woman deals more easily with a contradiction between theory and practice so long as the theory is merely intellectual. He is very ready to regard himself as committed as soon as he has grasped an idea. The divided multiplicity of his perceptions, which he

finds it hard to integrate into a single, comprehensive, felt experience, often means that a man is more inhibited in action than a woman, and this then gives rise to what may be either the real or the merely apparent phenomenon of a specifically masculine cowardice.

3. *Why is Religious Life Oriented More to Women than to Men?*

Before we go on to ask what follows for our present theme from this description of masculinity, there is something else to be considered. In my part of the world women are regarded as, by and large, more devout than men. Statistically, more women are churchgoers than men. The general tendency is to regard an intensified religious attitude as more normal and matter-of-course in a woman than in a man. A heightened degree of piety (in the form in which we are familiar with it) is apt, amongst us, to give an impression of unmanliness. Religion and the Church's religious education are regarded by many as being strictly in the women's department. One of Shaw's characters says somewhere, "I'm not a Christian, I'm a man." And someone else has said, "In Europe, a holy man is felt to be feminine."

How has this strange situation come about, in which, in Christian Europe, religion and the religious life are orientated to women rather than men? As in other spheres of life, there will have been a multiplicity of causes. I am not going to try to give any *adequate* account of them. But two factors which might occur to some people do not in fact exist: The special natures of man and woman do not determine any greater or less affinity to the Christian religion; and Chris-

tianity is not something specifically feminine. Religion is always something that belongs to the whole of humanity; God's call comes to the whole man, as he is, and with everything that he is and has. So the attachment of the whole person to God, the "faculty" for which consists not in some special aptitude or disposition but in the human being as a whole, may and must differ as between man and woman; but it cannot be any less total in man than in woman, nor can a man be any less apt for it, so long as he is allowed to be "pious," i.e., attached to God, in his own way. So this state of affairs in Christian Europe today cannot be attributed to a comparative weakness in the religious faculty in men; so long, that is, as religion is *religion*, and not the embodiment of some special, partial human endowment identifying itself with religion or assuming unwarrantable prominence in religion.

We could arrive at the same result by considering the history of religion as a whole. The evidence of that history is that religion has always been at least as much men's affair as women's. Nor has Christianity itself anything specifically feminine about it if we consider the *essence* of Christianity. Its founder is a man, its message is "God's Kingdom," those who bear office in it are men; it is men who have done the decisive acts in its history, men who have laid down the law in it. In dealing with its sacred writings the difficulty has been, if anything, to show that they do acknowledge the due and fitting place and status of women.

Nor can we say that religion means self-surrender and love and that this is more a woman's part than a man's. For the loving surrender involved in our relationship with God has nothing specifically feminine about it. For the "surrender"

here meant is carried out at least as much in "service," achievement, struggle, fulfilment of moral demands, respect etc. as in attitudes bearing a closer affinity and homology to anything specifically feminine.

There is a further point: Our present question must not be mixed up with another quite different one, i.e., why it is that faith and piety do not come easily to people today (there is at least a period to which this applies, and it is still continuing)? The causes affecting both men and women in this way today do of course bring about a diminution of Christianity amongst men. It may even be the case that their effect is in the first instance quicker amongst men than amongst women, since the latter, with their characteristic desire to preserve and maintain, may be more conservative, and may also (being at home) be slower to come into contact with these causes themselves (technology, urban culture etc.). But this circumstance is certainly not enough to explain the whole extent of the difference in religious practice between men and women in our age and our part of the world. So the answer to this second question is not an answer to the question with which we are here concerned.

There probably is no answer to it, except to say simply and honestly that Christianity, as it has been *in the concrete* in Europe of recent centuries, has as a matter of fact taken on certain features that appeal more to a feminine than to a masculine religiosity and piety, making it easier for women and harder for men to be pious Christians. We cannot dispute the end-product (it can be established statistically), and we cannot give any better answer to the question posed by this fact. So all we can honestly do is give this answer, even if we cannot say at all exactly (since it is by no means

easy to notice such things in oneself) in what respects our Christianity, as it is in the concrete, has gone "effeminate" ("effeminate" is the word here, because it is just as right that there should be a Christianity specified as feminine as one specified as masculine, but we must describe as "effeminate" something that has taken on the stamp of a feminine character where it does not belong). This answer, of course, is itself a further question, for we can immediately go on to ask how it has come about that European Christianity in recent centuries has to some extent gone effeminate. Such a development must of course have its causes, since nothing happens at random. Now the possibility of an evil is always to be found in a good, because the latter, though good and holy, is nevertheless finite and subject to finite and fallible men. Hence we can, in this sense, tranquilly seek for the cause of this misdevelopment within Christianity itself, without thereby falling back into the explanation, rejected already, that Christianity is essentially more feminine than masculine. The fact of an entity's containing within itself the possibility of abuse and corruption is not the same thing as its being orientated to that condition. Good things are capable of corruption *despite* their essential nature, bad things tend towards it by nature. Hence the fact that Christianity and the Church are divinely instituted and indestructible does not exclude the possibility that Christianity and the Church as they are in the concrete may succumb, partially and within certain limits (which we shall not define here), to misdevelopments, distortions and deviations.

Nor, of course, must we overlook this: when we assert the "fact" of a lower degree (in practice) of piety in men than in women, we never measure from all objectively requisite points of view, but from those which are practically possible

and laid down by certain tacit *a priori* assumptions; and our very selection of criteria is subject, in spite of ourselves, to a feminized concept of Christianity.

We are not going to hunt for the causes of this "mis-development," nor dramatize it and waste time grumbling over it. We simply assume the fact. We do not even mean to analyse the fact itself, and hence shall not make the attempt, which would be by no means easy, to say in what this feminism in later European Christianity consists. Any such attempt would be bound to take us too far afield.

Assuming this fact as we do is not to deny that there does also exist the phenomenon of a genuinely masculine Christianity which, being too masculine for over-feminized men, fails to appeal. The world is so complex and self-contradictory that the one fact does not exclude the other, and hence the same prescription will by no means apply in all cases. What I propose to conclude from the fact as we have asserted it (with due allowance for the reservation just made) is just one thing: It makes sense, and is useful, to call for a masculine Christianity in the Church. To voice such a demand is not, simply and without exception, a matter of forcing an open door. There must be *something* of urgency in such a programme, even for someone who is not in agreement with our observation, someone who holds that, in this respect, all is well in the Church, both in theory and in practice, and it is simply that men, for no ascertainable reason, just don't come to church in sufficient numbers. And this brings us back to the point at which we halted earlier on.

On the basis of man's special character as at least indicated above, we can now ask what a masculine Christianity would need to look like. Better: What is there that calls for pastoral

attention in order that men shall more easily be able to discover their right relationship to the Church and so become "men in the Church"? Once again I must stress the fragmentary character of any answer which can be given to this question here. It is highly possible that in what follows I shall be overlooking the most important point and handing out remedies for extremely secondary symptoms. Further, in trying to formulate my recommendations I shall to a great extent leave it to the reader to work out how they are based on my earlier sketch of the masculine character. Anyone who bears in mind what his own experience tells him of men, and what I tried briefly to indicate above, will have no difficulty in making the connection.

4. *Excessive Religious Demands Are not to be Made on Men*

The piety asked of men should not be such as to overburden them. They should not be called upon for too much. This may sound minimalist. But it simply has to be said. It means two things, quite distinct in themselves. The first really is a kind of minimal demand. We really do have to consider what can reasonably be expected of a man when he is a man of today; busy with his work, forced to occupy himself, whether he likes it or not, with a thousand things which formerly did not exist, and which consequently use up a part of his physical and mental energies which used to be available for religion. True, modern technology, with the hours of work resulting from it etc., does also set free time and energy which used to be unavoidably required for the necessities of life. But at this moment we are in a period of

transition, in which the man of today is inescapably more preoccupied than used to be the case with the non-religious sector of his life. A thing like this simply has to be seen and accepted as a fact, and our demands have to be regulated accordingly.

Is it always done? Is it possible, for instance, to expect people to enjoy sermons today in the way that they did perhaps in the Middle Ages, when the ordinary person was illiterate and so did not read books, had no newspapers, did not listen to the radio, did not have the "culture" of the illustrated papers?

Don't we, involuntarily, when thinking of a really good Catholic man, model him on the saints as we know them in history? But, while fully and clearly recognizing the saints and their real status as models for normal Christians, we have to say that (to use a comparison) the canonized saint is the "professional" amongst Christians, while the normal Christian, *by comparison with him* (please note the limitation!), is something in the nature of an amateur and cannot be anything else. Just as a reasonable professionalism in sport is an important thing precisely for amateur sport, just as amateur music depends on the professional musician, so it is with the saint in Christianity. But if it is God's will that there should be people (and the overwhelming majority at that) who have neither the aptitude nor the possibility nor the interior and exterior energies to become saints in the sense of getting canonized (because, while they do at bottom possess and perform their Christianity, they cannot embody it explicitly and tangibly in their lives to such a degree that they could be presented as models to others), then this fact, indisputable in itself, needs to be taken into account. I won-

der whether we really do this, always, everywhere, and clearly and consciously enough?

It is a characteristic of Central European men that they do not like to join in something when, because it makes excessive demands, they would only be able to join in with a bad conscience. When a man like this sees that the preponderant element amongst those who pass for exemplary Christians are those who have time on their hands, who are "in" Christian free-time activities because they would be bored without them, who give the impression of being frustrated clerics, who simply don't have any interests any longer outside the field of religion, Church affairs, and possibly Christian party politics—then a man of this sort, who cares about his work and his family and takes an interest in sport and similar worldly things, is going to find himself out of place amongst all these good Christians. I do not seriously want to praise the Sunday Mass truancy amongst the men of the southern nations and hold it up as a model; but it is perhaps a less inhibited kind of Christian mentality when people are not seriously dominated by the feeling that one is faced head-on with the alternatives of either being at Mass every Sunday or abjuring one's Christian faith altogether.

We sometimes get the feeling, in pastoral work, that we have on the one hand a small (and shrinking) circle of unqualifiedly good and zealous Christians, and then, alongside them, the majority of others, whom we never reach at all once they are past school age (except that they still vote Christian Democrat); that we have no contact with the whole category (a very large one) of those who are neither zealous Christians nor convinced non-Christians. And this state of affairs probably arises in part, at least, from this same fact

that the men of today, in my part of the world, think of Christianity as a list, precisely laid down, of things you have to do, and that you can only carry them out completely or not at all. If you think you cannot, or do not want to, then you stay outside the circle altogether, and are very chary of having anything to do with such people. (Practical note: The "Open House" in whose honour this very unfestive essay is being written ought to be conducted in such a way that people know that they can venture to show their faces in it without being asked for evidence that they have performed their Easter duties.)

5. *Grading Demands According to the
Degree of Grace, Insight, Ability,
Milieu and Age*

The Russian Communists have amongst us not only Party members but also "Friends of the Soviet Union" and similar cheaper lines in adherents. We Catholic Christians cannot do precisely the same thing. But we ought to think about what we can learn from this observation.

The Lord himself did not say everything there was to be said to his apostles right from the beginning. He introduced them slowly to his doctrine and demands and left a great deal to the Holy Spirit.

To look at it a little more closely: There may be religious and moral demands which exist objectively, here and now, for a given person. But it may be that I realize that the person concerned does not grasp them (as yet, at least), and rightly or wrongly thinks that he cannot fulfil them. It may be that under the formative or malformative influence of his

environment (of which he is the product to a much greater degree than we are apt to think) he simply cannot "realize" these demands as yet. It may be that in an environment which is to a large extent un-Christian this possibility applies to very many people; that (though it ought not to be so) this *ignorantia* or *impotentia invincibilis* is no longer merely an individual, but is a collective, sociological phenomenon (like, e.g., the opinion that polygamy was lawful, in the time of the Patriarchs).

The question is: What are the consequences of this in the pastoral sphere? Have these principles of moral and, above all, pastoral theology, which in such a situation have to be reckoned with, been, so far, thought out and clarified enough? How can the intolerance with which we affirm the unalterable norms of the Christian moral law and, over and above that, the ideal of Christian living, be so combined with tolerance towards human beings that our every contact and conversation with those who do not conform to these norms and ideals does not invariably have to founder in uncommunicative enmity? Of course we all want to be welcoming, tolerant and gentle. But are we really so? Is it not the case that the concrete forms laid down for this are such that in every individual case it has to be a matter of improvisation according to the individual's own tact, generosity and pastoral skill? Do we, where approach and attitude are concerned, differentiate between men according to their different *ages*? Are we often inclined to see in men, too clearly, only those things in which they do not (as yet) conform to the law of God and the Church, while what may be a much greater element in their lives of Christian and Catholic performance (though regarded perhaps as "merely" what any

decent man will do, as if God's grace were not needed for this!) is all too readily treated as normal and obvious and not deserving of recognition?

But the rule that excessive demands should not be made on a man in the way of piety has another meaning as well, entirely different from any that may seem at first to have a somewhat minimalist ring. What it means is that a man's piety should not be burdened with things which, either in themselves or in excessive doses, are not appropriate to him.

To understand what this means we have to extend our scope a little.

6. The Categorical and Transcendent Elements in Religion

Any religion (if it is not to remain mere theory) and Christianity in particular (being built on the incarnation of the Word of God, on a tangible Church and sacraments), has a double element in it, one side of which may be called the categorical, the other the transcendent element. What this means is that it is an essential and original part of authentic and Christian religion to have a tangible element: something that is institutional, articulate, accessible in terms of observable achievement, expressed in propositions and norms; a "bodily" element. But all this is authentic religion only if it points beyond itself to God, who is more than all this; who—right as all these things are, demanded by God himself, and made by him into effective signs of his presence and his grace—is nevertheless always and utterly that inexpressible majesty who remains inconceivable and nameless beyond every reality, religious reality included.

We must never identify God with religion, formula with reality, the achievement with the ultimate goal, the sacrament with grace itself, the Church with God's eternal kingdom itself, however indissolubly associated these unmingled sides of the one whole have been since God became man. The two aspects do not remain in one permanently fixed relation with each other. It is possible to be in the Church and yet be far from God. It is possible to receive a sacrament unfruitfully. It is possible, in prayer, to have said a great deal, formally speaking, and yet to have prayed very little. It is possible to make very penetrating observations in theology and yet have very little relationship to the matter in hand, because one's concepts are many but one's commitment slight.

It is also possible, on the other hand (though this does not make it right, praiseworthy and commendable), to pray very "little" (in terms of time) and yet be devout (meaning penetrated in one's own life by utter reverence for God and his will). It is possible, on occasion, to react to learned and penetrating theology as, almost, tactless chatter on subjects better left in silence, and yet to have understood more about the matter in question than some talkative theologian. It is possible to be unemotional about religion out of reverence; to be reserved out of adoring faith. It is possible to be mistrustful of one's religious feelings not because one is "tepid" but because one knows that God is as inexpressibly above all our feelings as he is above our thoughts, which remain of the earth even when we are thinking about supernal things. Now, it is permissible to think that the transcendent side of piety appeals more to a man than the categorical side. More especially in our present age. We are not disputing that

something of this sort has its own dangers, like everything finite. And it is, again, obvious that men must also be taught and guided to give the categorical side of religious performance its full due.

But the important thing here, for the moment, is to be clear that we should not ask too much of men on the categorical side of religious life. A man simply does not get the impression that a long prayer is always better than a short one. He is apt to be sceptical (even, and indeed especially, when he is genuinely devout) when we clerics talk about God and divine things rather as though we were the good Lord's privy councillors. In particular, he often has the impression today that the God with whom we seem to be concerned simply doesn't exist: the God who always comes to the aid of a good man; who likes his people to live good little bourgeois lives; whose chief concern is not to have revolutions, which he regards as necessarily attacks on his own overlordship; who lets us clergy keep his accounts for him, and sees altar and human government ("throne" used to be the word) as on a level. The man of today is in danger, at least, of going irreligious on religious grounds; or, to put it better, of wanting, on religious grounds, to be religious only in an anonymous sense. When it comes to any explicitly religious act, he feels somehow stupid, naïve, absurd, flat (and, partly reasonably and partly out of foolish pride, he is terribly afraid of being so); in relation to what is signified by them, these acts seem to him to be horribly inappropriate and disproportioned (a flapper gushing over the moon as "night's beauteous, silent chum"). He thinks, then, that it is best to avoid such acts as attempt to look directly at God and have directly to do with him; to honour the Inscrutable in silence

(silence even within ourselves!); not to attempt in any way to give the inexpressible a name; not to try to look at him but to let him look at us. Let him, that is, look on our unselfish, practical work on this earth; our quiet kindliness to our fellow men; our basic decency; the laconic patience with which we bear the unintelligibility of existence. In a man's relationship with God, it seems to him as though he were with us, standing silently behind us, as it were, just so long as we don't name him, don't look round at him; the moment we do, he vanishes. We might say, too, that man of today is terribly averse to an anthropomorphic God, such as many of us (clergy and others) have or seem to have. So he then goes on to think that he cannot believe at all, or at any rate not in the Church's way.

All this is not to say that every single thing in this attitude is right and praiseworthy. But the clergy, those who preach and give religious instruction, must take account of this attitude, allow for it, see it as a positive value (which we can, because the true God really is inexpressibly greater, more mysterious and incomprehensible than all we can think and say of him), and educate it so as to release it from its own particular danger of *hybris*. The "cowardice" often ascribed to men in religious matters arises at least in part from this source; because a man is intellectually a transcendentalist, because he has a lively sense of the difficulty, the analogous character of theological statement (even when he does not have any conscious theological training), it does not come easily to him to take a decision in a religious question. When he listens he needs to be able to see that the speaker is aware that we are wanderers amid "shadows and images," as Newman had written in his epitaph. He needs to be able to ob-

serve, in preaching, that to be decisive and loyal to one's principles is not the same thing as that primitive fanaticism which treats a formula, drawn up to delimit some obscure question and leave it as such (because it has to be left so: error lies in simplification), as a solution penetrating to the heart of the matter. A man wants modesty in his teacher of divine truths. Any sort of "boost" in religious things does not, in the long run, impress him.

Because of his sense of the transcendent purity of religion, he has a horror of the perversion of religion to earthly ends. This does not make things easy for a priest: he cannot help its being the case that defending religion means defending his own way of life. So "he's bound to talk like that." In dealing with men, who take less interest in him as a person than women, he can only really overcome this trickiness in his situation and the almost unavoidable mistrust that will be felt of him (one of the sources of anti-clericalism, and one that can never be finally blocked) by showing in his whole life, and the modest scale of it in earthly matters (along with competence such that it can be seen that he could achieve success in the world), that he does not do the job because he is a priest but is a priest because he is devoted to the job, or, better, to the living God. The man that the priest is cannot show this easily, because it always comes hard to a man to show anything, and because the mere ordinary man that the priest is, is being asked here for almost more than he can manage.

What is characteristic for a man is the transcendent, anonymous, indirect, tacit side of religion. Hence, when he is not explicitly, e.g., as a priest, involved in the service of the Church (which would give him access, on the masculine

"services rendered" principle, to an explicit ecclesiastical task), he will always experience a certain difficulty in taking part in specifically ecclesiastical things (more or less categorical in character), beyond whatever may be the normal, modestly ordinary level. Of course shyness of this sort over, e.g., taking part in Rosary processions, and anything else that carries the suggestion of exhibitionism of one's religious feelings, can also arise from real cowardice. But it is often, too, the feeling, which is at least understandable, of an incurable incongruity between what is really being signified and its ecclesiastical, institutional expression. And so, in such matters, men must meet with understanding in the Church.

7. Men Should Have a Share of Responsibility in the Church

The piety asked of a man in the Church should be one that positively harmonizes with the masculine character. Hence he ought not to have to feel that he is merely an object of the clergy's care. He should share in responsibility. He should be able to make a contribution by his own actions. Free speech is honest speech. In the long run, he is only going to pull the clergy's chestnuts out of the fire (— salvage their influence in the world) if he is going to be allowed to share in the consumption of them. There has for a long while been talk of the adult layman. I wonder whether anything practical has yet come of this talk? There is such a thing as public opinion in the Church, or there ought to be. Are men welcome in this field, and encouraged and taught to make full use of this right to form a public opinion? Again, it has been considered a useful thing in recent times to say

to the clergy: Don't be afraid of men! While fully recognizing that there does also exist superficial, inaccurate and premature criticism and grouching, we can say that it has not for many centuries been so certain and obvious as it is today that criticism of this or that individual thing in the Church is inspired by love and concern. In former times it was impossible to ignore the Church. If you rejected or hated her you were bound to criticize her. Today it is perfectly easy to ignore her. You can easily leave her to one side and simply go about your daily business. So any "born" Catholic who criticizes things in the Church today is someone who loves the Church or still has some concern for her. The clergy ought, then, to listen to such criticisms.

Men, on the other hand, ought in their behaviour to help the priest to overcome his fear of men. This is often necessary. For the priest is a man himself; often somewhat cowardly, often inhibited by a man's shyness over speaking of holy things. A brotherly relationship should establish itself between a priest and a man who is a mature, adult layman. This does not prevent the layman from respecting the office and competence of the priest. A real man has no great desire to meddle in the priest's special tasks. True, there are men who love to play the parson. But they are rare. Nor are they usually very masculine.

But at the same time, a man should be aware of his own Christian task of which a priest cannot relieve him. This is not, first and foremost, a matter of "Catholic Action" in the strict sense; meaning that assistance, often necessary, holy and thankworthy, which laymen can render to priests in the priests' own tasks: a supporting share in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. It is rather the "action of Catholics," in which

the layman, the man, is on his own natural ground; in his job, in public life, in the family, in the world of science and culture. It is in this sphere, only seemingly "profane," that a man has his place. And when he has done in this sphere whatever needs to be done in it, then it is true that he has not done everything that a man has to do (he has to pray, he can love God, he has to bear up against the problems latent in existence and the pressures of life); but he has done something which he has got to do as a Christian and a man of the Church, something in virtue of which he is a man in the Church. The Church is not an end but a means; a means towards the Kingdom of God, the sanctification of the world, the liberation and redemption of everything terrestrial. Hence a man is taking his proper place in the Church when he does, in the world, what the Church is required to do in the world and can only do through laymen. To do a hand's turn is another way of folding one's hands, particularly in a man. When trade unionists confer, Christ is as much "in the midst of them" as if the Rosary were being said. It is not a question of playing off these things against each other. But it is necessary that men should realize more and more clearly that by such means, too, they are growing into the Church, and the Church, through them, is growing into the world. It is their calling to extend the invisible sphere of the Church until at last, in the eternal Kingdom of God, the world and the Church will no longer be distinguishable.

8. Tasks for Men in the Church

The technical, planned, manufactured world of today, which is replacing more and more the natural, given world that "just grew," is after all a specifically masculine world.

All the rampant feminism that there is about is merely an effect of unsuccessful compensation. In this masculine world, men of the Church have a task to do. The beginning of it consists of quite small, obvious things: calmness, reasonableness, reliability, responsibility, ungrumbling bearing of the inescapable burdens of this world, together with a taken-for-granted ascesis in regard to all those possibilities for self-indulgence and addiction which have now grown beyond all measurability, a clarity of will, not to do anything and everything simply because it can be done (the man of tomorrow will have to overcome this childish gadget-happy attitude of people today in regard to the possibilities implied in a technological world; he will have to develop a completely new ascesis, which will be specifically masculine because consisting in action, not suffering). All this is very "natural" because, basically, everybody realizes that it makes sense and has got to be. But it is all very "supernatural," because without the grace of Christ, whether explicitly invoked or given, unasked, by God, it cannot be achieved. Even those virtues which seem to be purely "humanist" do already bear witness to the grace of God, imparted to man and his history as the grace of Christ and the Church.

Then come all the works which man is commissioned by God to do in the world. They, too, seem at first to be purely secular achievements. But they are of significance for eternal life. If man, in carrying out the historical task laid upon him in this world, is to avoid doing it to his own damnation (secular as well as eternal), he has to be something more than a man of this world; he has to be a man of God. Whether in the short or the long run, what counts, even over the simplest necessities of life, is the basic attitude. If, for example, someone thinks that the whole meaning of exist-

ence has got to be found within the limits of what can be experienced within this world, the limits of the economic and purely human, then, even in the most ordinary things of everyday life, he is going to act differently, on the whole and in the long run, from someone whose standards are not all confined within this world. For either he will turn into a worldly-wise man, sceptical and cynical, and lose heart for any real responsibility for the world; or else he will want to achieve the "Kingdom of God" (called by some other name, of course) by violence in this world and become a utopian saviour-by-violence, bringing about a greater misery than the one he set out to cure. In the end, the things of this world can only be seen in their right proportion by someone who looks at them from a standpoint outside the world. Only from this vantage-point can one love them with serenity and patience, without either overvaluing or despising them. Thus a man's piety is significant in relation to his task in the world; and the forever unmanageable residue of that task teaches him to be pious: i.e., to be open, in humility and love, towards that unutterable mystery which, while above all experience, is the ultimate meaning of all experienced reality and the ultimate solution to all its enigmas: that mystery whom, in adoration, we call God.

We need to make a start, gradually, on saying something on our theme. For what has been said so far does not, indeed, amount to much. But perhaps what is most pertinent and important cannot be said so easily. Perhaps the central answer to the question of men in the Church has not been made at all clear yet. There is, in any case, plenty more needing to be clarified. We need to distinguish more precisely between what, in men, is willed by God, and what the sinner in a man

makes of it. We need to ask how the first of these is redeemed through the grace of Christ; what it really is, and what it becomes like when liberated, elevated and divinized by the grace of eternal life. We need to say how a man is liberated from this sinful masculinity, through that same grace, as much by putting up with himself as by really overcoming that sinfulness. We need to say what all this has to do with the Church, she being not merely a more or less important society for improving morals and satisfying religious needs but the holy community of those who are called and chosen for the life of the new, heavenly man. We need to show clearly that a man is a real man only when he is more than merely a man. We need to show in what respects true manliness is threatened in our day, so that we often simply do not know what a real, authentic man is like, and so regard as manly what is only a sinful distortion of manliness as willed by God. But—St. Gregory said, thirteen and a half centuries ago, "*Aliter igitur admonendi sunt viri atque aliter feminae*": men and women have to be talked to differently. So I shall let at least one principle of the masculine approach win through in the end; I shall not go on too long.

✓ Man is a being who is only in process of discovering what his being is. He is a being open towards the infinite (otherwise we could have nothing to do with God). But what this means is something still to be revealed. For, because man is thus open towards the infinite, he has to set about becoming what he is. And only when he has become what he had, by nature and grace, always been (but in embryo, by vocation and promise), only when he has arrived at the beatific possession of God's infinity, does he really understand what he is. And only then will it really become plain what manliness

is in a man. While it is true that then there is no more marrying or giving in marriage, yet one does not cease then to be what one was and what one became during life. For eternity is not the prolongation of time but its endless fruit, preserving whatever existed or came to exist here. And if, when that which is perfect is come, man puts aside childish things, so also he will put aside whatever in his manhood is incomplete and hopelessly confined to this world's limits; yet that will remain which is the real essence and eternal meaning of manhood. Who as yet can truly say what that is? But when that fulfilment comes, then the "man of God" (1 Tim. 6.11), who has "done manfully" (1 Cor. 16.13) will have found that eternal image which he sought for here in conflict and pain and many disappointments. Then, indeed, the perfected community of these perfected men and women will no longer be called the Church in the proper sense, but the eternal Kingdom of God. But just as the individual person is perfected, so will the Church be the perfected community of perfected human beings, whom God made in the beginning man and woman, so that in this too, this unfathomable riddle which we ourselves are, he might utter himself to us in a word of love. In a blessed and surpassing sense, then, there will always be men in the Church of eternity. This is what, through all the toil of everyday life in time, is being brought about through men in the Church.

5

The Scholar

Notes on Devotion in the Academic Life

THERE ARE STUPID LAYMEN who think that a person who lives a life of study cannot be devout, and stupid clergy (they do exist) who think that the only way for anybody to be devout is that practised by pious old women.

It is possible to arrive by practice at ignoring God, but you have to squint to do it, i.e., to manage to look past the mystery, which grows greater, not less, the more you study. For all knowledge of what can be fathomed is simply a clearing away of hindrances that block our view of the unfathomable, incomprehensible mystery.

To break with the Church because some priest or other gets on your nerves is to be like a man who betrays his country because its Tax Department sends him rude letters.

So long as one is young, there is the danger of overrating science. When one gets older one perceives that science is not out to decipher the ultimate riddles of existence. One then becomes more appreciative of people who carry out the word

of God, even if they have forgotten a good deal of all the science they ever knew and hence produce a rather backwoodsman effect. Quite intelligent young people realize even early in life what science is good for and what it is not. For there is no need to pass personally through all the follies of youth in order to become wise. There is also the danger of getting stuck, even in later years, at the stage of youthful cocksure arrogance and turning into an infantile old man, accepting the worn-out theories of the nineteenth century as the latest achievements of science. There are still such people about today, in whom really intelligent young people can study the danger of failing to outgrow youthful stupidities.

There are things that can only be understood by someone who loves them. The Church is one of these.

Christianity demands the utmost in spiritual courage and in breadth, because it embraces everything, reaching out into every human sphere: religion of the heart, and folk religion; tradition, and the Spirit blowing ever anew; official structure, and charisms; inwardness, and a bodily cult; struggle for the well-being of this life, and yearning for what can only come hereafter. No wonder many people are too narrow for it. These people then think that Christianity is narrow.

The intellectual today does not have as easy a time as the scholar of the Middle Ages, when religion, and matters directly connected with it, were almost the only thing in which it was possible to be interested if one did not want to be wholly absorbed in the necessities of daily life. Today there is the possibility of not only knowing and putting up with the world, but of changing it through knowledge. But is this a reason for becoming a barbarian in matters of reli-

gion, or for making chemistry or atomic physics one's religion? Even tomorrow's world, when we shall have atomic power and automation at our beck and call, will be a world overshadowed by that wordless mystery that we call God; a world in which we come into existence without being consulted and in which death is an entering into mystery. So all that remains for the truly knowledgeable man is to set about living with a world that is not under his ultimate control, and a God who is not at his disposal—to be of the world and above the world at the same time, as one of the Fathers of the Church said seventeen hundred years ago.

If anyone wants to have the Church changed, he must make himself the starting-point of renewal. For the critic himself is part of what the Church is suffering from. For usually his own life is not much of a recommendation for Christianity.

If you are an intellectual, you only know Christianity as your faith if you have made the acquaintance of the great minds in the history of Christendom: an Augustine, an Aquinas, a Francis of Assisi, a Pascal, a Newman, and many others. What would you think of a man who tried to pass judgement on the German people, its history, and its value, without even having heard of Walther von der Vogelweide, Goethe, Schiller or any of the other great ones who have belonged to this people; a man who judged the character of a nation by the colour of its letter-boxes? Yet there are so-called intellectuals who have "settled the question of Christianity" in this sort of fashion.

It simply is the case that the highest and most comprehensive form of thought is adoration. Prayer is the most decisive word that a man can say. There are some highly articulate

scholars who are yet in an ultimate sense deaf-mutes: they do not listen to the word of God, and have nothing to say to God.

The "children of this world" can indeed do a great many things better than Christians. This is not to be wondered at. They "specialize" over a small range and at a very manageable level. Hence they can do it better than someone who has been given a task beyond possibility of completion: the love of God.

It is really only now that Christianity is beginning to have its true opportunity. For what Christianity, as the religion of all men, has always been looking for—one single world with one united history—is only now beginning to exist. And only now that machines are doing his work for him is man going to have time to get his head and heart free for God and his service. Only now is the riddle of the world deciphered to such a degree, and man himself disillusioned to such a point, that he is no longer liable to confuse the world with God. The world, which man has made into a frighteningly austere powerhouse, is now yearning for some new kind of consecration, so as to make it possible to go on putting up with it; for in the long run man will not let himself be made a mere minder of machines. We need only imagine the situation in which those programmes and utopias have been achieved and established which are being proffered to us today (whether Communist or not is of no consequence: the American version of faith in progress is just as stupid as the Eastern). Everybody, then, will be living a long life and have very little work to do; and then the question arises, "What now?" It can then be seen that in this state of saturation either there will be a suicide epidemic or a

frenzy of mutual destruction, or else mankind will continue its life by drawing on the strength of those who still know what they are meant to be doing. Amongst these there may perhaps be many who do not know that they are Christians. But in such a state of saturation within this world, Christianity would be the only chance the world would have of surviving its "good fortune."

According to Pius XII there needs to be a public opinion in the Church. To form it and provide a voice for it is the special vocation of those laymen who are intellectuals.

True enough, it is a masculine characteristic to be shy about the soul, so that a man in the intellectual world is not much inclined to talk like a parson or a Party propagandist about God, faith, and our longing for eternity. But such a person should not make this shyness about religious feeling into a cloak for his cowardice and the lack of civic courage with which he conceals his Christian convictions. Here as elsewhere there is not only a time to be silent but also a time to speak. When one sees the self-assurance with which, when it comes to the salvation of the world, recipes are bandied about which would not last fifty years even if they were to be accepted and carried out, it really does become hard to see why the Christian intellectual in public life displays so little trust and self-confidence in championing Christian principles in the lives of nations. If he sometimes gets the impression, rightly, that these principles are very general and ambiguous in character, what this means is that it is his vocation to take these principles which the Church announces, which are for all times and all contexts, and work out lines of action from them for his own time and in his

own context. This is a task of which the Church cannot relieve him. Lay people have got to take responsibility for the world in a genuinely autonomous way; there has got to be a genuine lay apostolate that is something other than mere devoted bottle-washing for the clergy in *their* job, praiseworthy though this too may be.

An intellectual who fights shy, in his marriage, of having children ought not to pose as a champion of his country and national group. It would be dishonest and un-Christian to do so, since in his private life he has opted for the destruction of his people.

Doubts of the Faith and darkness in the Faith are two different kinds of thing. Darkness and difficulties in the Faith become a stimulus to the growth of faith, if the person concerned searches and prays. The things of faith are not meant any more than anything else to be treated, spiritlessly and sceptically, on a "let-sleeping-dogs-lie" principle. One is meant to enquire and think about them. It is of course necessary to make one basic assumption: the right solution to such questions (the right one, not the cheaply easy one) is one that leads into the nameless mystery of God. Any other solution would not be one at all. But this assumption does not mean that there is nothing to think about in theology.

Modern man knows that he has no choice in his life but to have confidence in the experts: to trust the people who know something about matters which he himself does not quite understand and which are nevertheless vitally important to him: doctors, atomic physicists etc. In these fields it is regarded as infantile or senile to go running to quacks or

to practise do-it-yourself alchemy. It is only when it comes to religious things that many people think themselves bound to run themselves up a religion of their own off the cuff, and see it as highly intelligent to pass rapid judgement on the Church and her theologians, who have, after all (leaving aside any loftier title to consideration), been studying such things for a considerable time. Even someone who thinks he is not a believer ought to have this much: a respect for religion and its visible embodiment in the history of the Church.

The Church declares that she does not know whether any particular person, *in concreto*, is lost or not. So she does not know that any one person, *in concreto*, does not have any faith. So a person who thinks that he has no faith, or any Christian faith, should ask himself now and then whether he may not be misunderstanding himself and interpreting himself wrongly. Even the very smallest grain of reverence, if it is a free act of radical decision, holds infinity within it, even if the man who is reverent in this way cannot say very much about it. Who knows whether a man may not be hanging at the right hand of the Crucified on the scaffold of existence if he accepts his destiny, silently and patiently, in ultimate fidelity to the light in the darkness? Given that a man is living life in the power of God's grace (and he does not always need to be reflexively aware of this), then we may say that Christianity is only the interpretation and self-realization of what such a person is doing. There is always far more being intellectually known and freely done by a person than he reflexively tells himself about and can interpret to himself. Hence a person who believes that he is an

unbeliever must be careful. It is by no means so easy to avoid being a crypto-Christian in a world in which God has, as a matter of fact, created everything and hence is not so easily eliminated from reality as people, both pious and impious, often seem to think. But an intellectual has a duty to arrive, on the basis of this intimate Christianity in the depth of his own being, at a better understanding of the faith of his catechism, and, on the basis of this official and authoritative Christianity, with its clarifications and distinctions, to help his interior Christianity to achieve growth and maturity.

When committing yourself to a philosophy of life, you should ask yourself whether it could seriously be offered as a solution to all human conditions (for small and great, for strong and weak, in life and death, in poverty and riches). The question would be enough to dissolve in advance a great many "philosophies of life" arranged for themselves by moneyed, "cultured" people. If a person has nothing to offer but questions without answers, he should not propose this opinion to others as a philosophy of life. People know without his telling them that there are a great many problematical things in life. A person who lives without finding any meaning in his existence has no justification in thinking his scepticism particularly deep. You do not have to bore very deep to think that there is nothing behind anything. Such profundity is indistinguishable from superficiality. An atheist should at least be concerned about whether the effect produced by his atheism is one of credibility or at least of honesty. An atheist who is concerned in this way is a person with whom one can talk. An atheist who makes his doctrine into a fixed philosophy of life produces an effect of stupidity or barbarism.

The progress of an intellectual Christian in the spiritual life consists largely in the fact that his life compels him to go back to the sources to a greater extent than other people. This kind of return is progress. All that is needed is not to be afraid of it. The better your communication with the source, the more abundantly the water will of itself flow.

6

The Christian Teacher: Freedom and Constraint

BEFORE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND how I want to deal with this theme, and why I select certain things and not others from the whole comprehensive and inexhaustible field which it covers, two preliminary observations are necessary.

First of all, whenever anything is to be said about teachers, the subject changes as though of its own volition into a discussion of the person being educated and what he is to be educated *for*; a discussion of the educated, maturely cultivated human being and Christian. In every other profession, or almost every other, the object and hence the nature of the profession is to render some particular limited service within the human community. But the task of the teacher, like that of the priest, is always the whole man. This is the measure of his dignity, of the greatness of his calling. But this at once means that we are not losing ourselves in generalities, not missing the target of our theme, when, in talking about teachers, we try to say something about human beings and

Christians in general. For however much there may be, and is, of a technically pedagogical nature in the narrower sense, which can and must be talked about, the goal of education is simply the whole man and the whole Christian, in whatever form may be imposed upon him by his exterior and interior situation. The teacher is an educator in the true sense of the word if and insofar as he himself is a human being and a Christian in a fully mature and consistent way. So I think I shall not be accused of taking an easy refuge in vague generalities if, at this teachers' conference, I talk about teachers precisely by seeming to talk merely about human beings and Christians in general.

My second preliminary is this: I presume that I am talking both to teachers working in Catholic schools and to others who teach in non-denominational schools. We have got these two different kinds of school in our country now, and there is no denying the difference in their two outlooks on life. Nor do I need to repeat expressly here those basic principles and ideals which the Church declares to be hers on the subject of the form a school should take. But having taken all this for granted, we may say that the tasks and concrete structure of the two types of school do largely approximate to each other as far as concerns, once again, the teacher who is really a Christian and who does not forget to look beyond his sacred principles to the actual state of affairs, willed as it is by God, or at least subject to his providence.

For we need only consider this much: On the one hand, a Catholic school is not a closed structure turning on its own axis like a Leibnizian monad. It is not the only factor in anyone's education, and it is not educating for itself but for life. The other factors, good and bad, and the life for which

a Catholic school of our age and country is educating people, can be briefly characterized as a life of Christians in a *diaspora*. Hence, in the time and place in which we live, a Catholic school, in educating and forming the human beings entrusted to it, is doing this properly only if it is making them mature and strong for living humanly and Christianly in a milieu opposed to the one in which the educating is done; for the school aims, so far as it can, at giving this education in a homogeneous Christian milieu. But it has necessarily, today, to educate people not for a homogeneous Christian milieu but for one that is indifferent and even hostile towards Christianity. So the school sends its people out from a holy land of unity in faith into the *diaspora*. If it chooses not to do this, it has failed in its vocation.

Then, on the other hand, the non-denominational school is itself a reflected image of the *diaspora*: it has been produced by it, it is sometimes an unavoidable consequence of it, especially at the higher levels of schooling. Yet it too, at least as far as concerns the intentions and task of the Christian teachers working in it, should be forming the children of Christian parents into mature Christians fit for the *diaspora*; not least by the fact that such teachers are setting before these children the spectacle of a life lived in this human and Christian way. Thus from the point of view of Christian parents and Christian teachers the object of a school of this sort and of the education given in it is the same as in a Catholic school.

If we consider the fact that even for children who go to Catholic schools, the total educational milieu (home, cinema, playing-fields, street, radio, television, neighbourhood etc.) simply is not and, however much we may deplore it, cannot

any longer be homogeneously Catholic; if, then, while there may be Catholic schools, there can no longer be any homogeneously Catholic educational world, we can indeed say that neither in their goal nor, to a great extent, in their educational milieu is there any longer much difference between the two types of school. You may regret this. You may point to the often very distressing results which this "education in an open society" has had everywhere from the start. But (and we shall return to this explicitly later on), so long as this situation cannot be altered, you may and must see it as the will of God calling for a Christianity which will bear in it the special character of this *diaspora* situation.

The suggestion made here is meant to convey only one thing: that in both kinds of school teachers are confronted, basically, with the same task, the same need and the same grace of God; so that in this connection the difference between the two kinds can be ignored, though neither its essential character nor its importance is to be denied. I might formulate it this way: If by "school" we mean the whole educational milieu in which a person is placed today, then all children are, though in different degrees, in non-denominational schools. This does not indeed mean that we should set about increasing this degree, but it does mean that the educational task, and hence the personality of the teacher, in both kinds of school has to be very much the same. It means that we can say very much the same kind of thing of both types of school. And this was the point of the second of my preliminary remarks.

The two preliminary remarks together amount to this: What we have to talk about is the constraint and freedom of a human being and a Christian; and by dint of this we

shall have talked about teachers and their task, both in Catholic and non-denominational schools.

(1) First we have to talk about the constraint imposed on a Christian man and a teacher. To a modern man, only too accustomed to living in fear of force and repression, the word may perhaps sound offensive and irritating. Hence it may be that those who proclaim freedom as their one and only programme for life and for education (one cannot but question whether the slogan is always entirely honest) have an easier task, as men and as educators. In any case, we Christians cannot talk in this way. We do not want to conceal anything, and we know that our programme is always going to be folly and scandal to those who do not believe. We acknowledge, fearlessly and unambiguously, that man is subject to a sacred order, a law, a will that is not that of himself or of any earthly collective but is the will of God; the binding force of an objective, universally valid, essential moral law which is written in the nature of man, in his heart. In addition, we acknowledge a historical revelation of the living God in Jesus Christ which is binding on men, and hence a formulated religion which is not simply the expression of vague, immanent religious feeling but which includes commandment, formula, law, authority and order.

We affirm our adherence to a historical tradition, not only at the political and cultural level but at that of religion and the Church, even when this implies a kind of burden and constraint upon us, in that its claims limit to some extent the range of our choices and decisions. This is not even confined to what we Christians regard as having been constituted as part of the Church and of Christianity directly by God in Christ, which is of "divine law" and beyond the reach of our

arbitrary, historically creative freedom altogether. So we have the permanently valid precepts of the natural moral law, the theonomic factor in our ethics; we have Christianity and the Church as something established by the word of revelation; we have an abiding obligation towards tradition—all these constraints and others like them are there, a Christian has to accept them, a teacher has to display them in his life and introduce them to young people.

Here, too, we must say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel," even though its message of constraint may be foolishness to some and to others a veritable religious scandal. A man and a Christian is not autonomous but theonomous. The centre of gravity of his being is outside himself. And this condition of being centred elsewhere, this state of being permanently and inescapably thrust out of himself into that absolute mystery which is called God, is not simply something that makes itself obscurely felt from time to time in marginal experiences of the transcendent and the ineffable, but something concrete, something that reaches into ordinary human living—in the form, in fact, of that constraint of which we have been speaking.

But: We human beings who are Christians today have the sacred duty and right of seeing this constraint correctly, and of living it, and displaying it in our lives, with such validity that it will be seen to be a constraint which makes us free, a liberation and formation of the human being as he truly and vitally is. One will begin by gradually perceiving that, for freedom to have its proper beauty, one must know not only what one is free *from* but what one is free *for*. Freedom can have the real nature of freedom only when it derives its value and meaning from that for which one is free. If a man

were free to do anything and everything whatsoever but forbidden to do anything definitive, forbidden to assert the greatness of what is great or the littleness of what is little, he would be condemned to wander unconfined in an empty waste of indifference; he would be a man damned into freedom, not redeemed into freedom.

A Christian and one who teaches Christianity must show forth true freedom in his life, meaning the freedom to which constraint liberates us. He must show that a man becomes free by committing his life to a task and a goal, a truth and a binding law. He must believe that in his heart of hearts a right-minded and decent man does not want simply to be liberated from everything whatsoever; that he becomes desperate and unhappy when he does not know from what he should refrain and what he should set about doing, to whom he can dedicate himself and whom he can serve. It is not that he wants to be compelled by any external force; the higher the reality, the more personal the self-giving, the less can force do in the matter. You can be forced to pay your tailor's bill, and even if you merely do it under compulsion, the bill is still paid. Faith, reverence, love of God, confession of the conviction of one's heart, cannot be forced; if they are done under compulsion, they are no longer themselves. No one who wants to enforce such things ever achieves what he wants. This is no mere conviction of modern democratic society but a truth of which Christianity has always been conscious, even if it has made a bad job here and there (no more, if it comes to that, than the modern age has done) of applying it in practice and distinguishing between things in which force can help and make a contribution, and things with which it is incompatible.

But things in which force is out of place can still be subject to a sacred Ought and Must; we can still find in them that constraint which sets us free; a man can still pour himself out for the sake of a goal and a task to which he knows himself to be bound; there can still be a categorical imperative of duty and love. We have no right to flinch before constraint of this kind; we shall not blush to champion it, to display it in our lives, to call upon others for it, in the infallible certainty that, in his indestructible heart, man does not long for the liberty which is licence, the arbitrary freedom of anarchy and lawlessness, but for the freedom by which a man subjects himself to that which is greater than himself, that which, if he will live for it, can alone liberate freedom itself into its own true meaning. This is a truth that has to be both seen and lived; freedom which seeks to preserve itself remains sterile and empty; freedom which responds to that higher demand that binds it achieves its true nature. Freedom lives by freely losing itself to the law which constrains it; if it tries to preserve itself, it gets lost in undifferentiated emptiness.

Further, this constraint which faith imposes on a mind disposed towards truth is an unloosing and liberation into the fullness of truth. But we have to live this fact of the freedom of faith, rightly understood, for ourselves and as an example for those whom we teach. Faith liberates. How? Because it opens out into the absolute fullness of reality. Who is it who is in truth bound and imprisoned? He who sees only one half of reality and takes it for the whole. But seen properly and precisely, the constraint of faith simply has the task and function, often a hard and painful function, of preventing this imprisonment within the merely partial. The official belief

of the Church should not be conceived of as an unsurveyable collection of individual propositions like the tangle of prescriptions in a code of law. What we have to do is, both in our thinking and our living, so to penetrate into this reality of faith that we experience it at once in its unity and its infinity. We thus become more and more aware of the nature of this interconnection; of the fact that basically the content of the Catholic faith consists of a few quite simple, comprehensive realities, which penetrate all the rest and from which they are derived; that they are mysteries, but mysteries which bear on themselves the signature of that mystery to which man finds himself committed from within; the mystery which he expects, without which he would have to see himself as imprisoned within the damnation of his own finitude.

Now, it is possible for a person to grasp, from within, that the living God is not merely a remote creator but a radical, absolute presence of compassion and self-communication to the world, to such a point that any form of pantheism can only be seen as a futile imitation of this real, supremely exalted and yet truly sustaining omnipresence, all-pervading energy, and self-communication of God by grace. It is possible for a person to grasp, from within, that man has been given a true *agon*, an historical, historically irreversible existence, both for the individual and for world history as a whole. It is possible to grasp, from within, in the mysterious light of grace, that this living God, who acts in a true partnership with man, and who is directing the world towards a goal, has already himself entered into a relationship of absolute intimacy with the world, in which he comprehends and constitutes all the dimensions of human existence, each in its

own way; so that everything, including society, law, human language, public history, just as much as the ultimate depths of man and what is inexpressible in his experience, is capable of being and is meant to be penetrated and formed by the being of God, the God who bestows himself upon the otherness of his creation and in that bestowal utters himself to it. And when these things have been grasped, then all the apparently bewildering multitude of mysteries in Christianity, all its articles of faith which seem merely to be imposed from outside by formal authority, are seen to be in reality almost self-evident articulations and explications; the organic unfolding of those few, wholly mysterious, basic mysteries which man, endowed with grace, finds himself living with in tranquil affinity and intimate understanding in the depths of his being.

He could never be clear about the basic features of this mystery which touches him from within, or about its concrete character and how it is deployed in the dimensional complexity of the world and of men, if it were not taught and explained to him from without in the message of faith, through the word of revelation attested by miracle; through the faith that comes by hearing. He has to ask himself the crucial question: Where, in this world of concrete events, has the absolute presence of God, which his inward experience of mystery leads him to expect, become an historical fact? And this question is relatively easy to answer because there is no phenomenon in the area of man's external historical experience which makes any serious claim to be the concrete realization of this grace-given fulfilment of man's absolute, grace-given demand for an unsurpassable self-communication of God to the world, apart from Jesus Christ and his Church.

But this necessity for *fides ex auditu* makes no difference to the fact that the faith thus preached is addressed to a person who, by grace already given in advance of this preaching, already really possesses that which he now hears; who already understands, in its primal unity, that which he now learns as set forth in the propositions of the Faith. For if the advance hints he has been given of the fundamental mystery of man's expectation and self-preservation and self-interpretation are right, then the formal content of the mystery of the Incarnation, of the Church, of the Redemption, of our eschatological situation, really "follows" of itself, once we have heard this interpretation and unfolding of it by listening to the message of revelation and have thus been safeguarded against giving the root mystery within us a false or inadequate, mistrustful interpretation; and all that remains is the question which the external message answers for us: Where, in the concrete, we are to find this thing which we are thus awaiting and seeking.

We have to keep renewing this interior experience and the grounding of the content of our faith in it. Then the Faith will become one unitary, simple whole, one self-evident mystery. And then the believer will come to understand that he is not being subjected to the unreasonable demand that he shall accept and hang on to a mere multiplicity of unrelated articles of faith. Instead, this one all-embracing and yet primeval and radical reality of the Faith will liberate him from all bondage to the merely partial and fragmentary, from the narrow perspective and the mere half-truth. The constraint which the Faith imposes amounts to a prohibition against stopping short and taking half of reality for the whole; against either settling permanently in one corner of

reality or ranging about here, there and everywhere in a merely vague, homeless and uncommitted fashion, without ever having the spiritual courage to accept the full infinity of God. For he simply does not accord us the right to be more modest about ourselves than he would have us; and that is, to be men graced with the infinity of divine life, since God himself has bestowed himself upon the world and this basic fact has now to be revealed throughout every dimension of humanity and its world.

The real Christian is the truly liberal man, because he more than any other is prohibited from leaving anything out, from shutting himself against any kind of reality and truth. He is also the true integrist, because he integrates everything, at least to the extent (for he cannot of course be more than in process of doing so) that he can leave nothing out, exclude nothing. He is, in fact, catholic, and hence liberal and integral; and only this liberal, integral openness to everything can be true orthodoxy. We must continually keep striving to be catholic in this sense. By thinking and living the Faith we must gradually come to see with greater clarity and greater joy that the constraint of faith is simply a liberation from the spiritless, sceptical, merely human narrowness of the knowledge that stops short; that it constrains us by obliging us to open out rather than to close down; that its definitions are the refusal of limitation; that, properly and truly understood, the Faith anathematizes nothing but that "No" by which a man abandons courage and despairs of attaining to greater and more all-embracing reality. It usually means a long journey before we personally come to a clear recognition that, in this sense too, it is "the truth" that "makes us free." Indeed, there is still a long way to go before theology itself grasps this

more clearly than it has hitherto. For today it is showing a tendency towards breadth rather than towards depth, towards new dogmas rather than towards the unity which lies at their source. But the more we attain to that unity, the more we realize that to be bound to dogma means to be freed into the infinity of God.

There is something similar to be said concerning our being bound to the morality of the Church and of Christianity. It has been said, truly, that the commandments and prohibitions of God come as restrictions only to someone whose own pride or fear binds him to the slavery of self-seeking, of short-sighted egoism and of that self-destructive subjection to instinct which kills the dignity of the spiritual person. This is true. But it has to be said, in addition, that a person does not experience this liberation through being bound to the moral prescriptions of Christianity if he knows those commands and prohibitions only as something imposed upon him from without by a formal authority. Being bound by them only makes one free if they are understood from within according to their inner content of meaning, and carried out by the power of that love which is the effect of the Spirit of God, as the expression of it and as the way it is obviously bound to work itself out. To the extent that they are merely an external "You shall" and "You must" on the part of a ruling authority, the commandments can still be disciplinarians and pedagogues (to use St. Paul's language) leading man out of the slavery of his self-seeking, which alienates him from God, and into the freedom of love, which has no need of any law except itself.

But they have to be understood in this way. Unless they take charge of us on behalf of God and his love, unless they

lead us out into the infinity of God, they will become the occasion of still deeper rebellion. God speaks his commandments only as aspects of that one word which is in reality the only word that he speaks: the word of his love, in which he commands us to love him and at the same time gives us that love for him in his love for us. The Church's preachers, and those who teach Christianity, are constantly faced with the question whether they, in turn, are proclaiming these commandments as words within one sentence whose subject, ultimately, is only that one thing on which depend the Law and the Prophets: Love. Love that makes us free because, paradoxically, we cannot love unless we have got beyond the command to love; because this love is the response to God's love for us, which is so personal, so much from heart to heart, that it is in the last analysis no longer an objective norm, distinct from God himself and teaching us how to make a right use of things made by God but not God, but becomes simply the one thing that we are and that God himself is; loving persons, who are free because now the commandment is really identical with ourselves and with God.

Even when it is not a question of those commandments in which is formulated the unchanging essential structure of reality itself—the commandments of natural divine law or of that law which derives from the supernatural realities of the order of salvation in Christ—when, that is to say, it is a matter of the positive laws of the Church and of other human societies, we have to be clearly and vitally aware that the goal and meaning of such laws is the liberty of love. A person who understands this properly will, on the one hand, approach such laws in reverence and obedience, even when they are not essential and unalterable, even when they are reformable

and even in need of reform; but, on the other hand, he will not make them the object of a rigidly legalistic cult. He will interpret them according to their sense; he will know that such commandments are for man, and not man for the commandments; he will know that in the Church there are occasions when one is dispensed and excused from such things; he will be more concerned with the spirit of the law than the letter. When he is concerned, as a teacher, with the fulfilment of such commandments, he will attach more importance to a full understanding of the spirit of the law, which is selfless love and freedom, than to "toeing the line." We Germans, pedantic legalist militarists that we are, are constantly in danger of legalistically and rigorously interpreting and enforcing such commandments of the Church, in a way that the Church never intended at all. Here as elsewhere, "Be not made slaves of men." Nor of the man within us, of course; the undisciplined egoist from whom these laws are there to set us free, and from whom we never shall be free if we are always ready to dispense ourselves from them whenever they strike us as hard and unpleasant.

(2) We now go on to talk about freedom, having spoken of the constraint that binds a Christian teacher, which meant necessarily having to speak of that which is the meaning and goal of that constraint: the freedom of the man who has been liberated and redeemed into the wide freedom of God.

In this connection, the first thing we have to say is that the Church is the sacrament of freedom. This sentence may sound odd, but is nevertheless true. Its meaning needs to be explained. To many people the Church may appear as a great, mysterious, holy, ancient, important and indispensable organization, with a large number of prescriptions, authori-

ties, offices, jurisdictions and dogmatic decisions. They may be convinced that all this is necessary, intended by God, and salutary. But this simply means that they think constraint is salutary and indispensable. They cannot then see the Church as the sacrament, the perceptible sign of the fact that the most real, the most essential, the most effectual of freedoms, the only genuine freedom in the ultimate sense, has entered into the world. And thus they see the Church in a very onesided way.

But Scripture tells us that the Church is the sacrament, the effective sign, of freedom. St. Paul says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. 3.17.) If we understand this sentence then we have grasped what is meant in this connection in our present discussion. This freedom, which Paul proclaims as, at bottom, the primary saving benefit of the Redemption, is not psychological freedom of choice as against determinism; Paul assumes this freedom as something obvious. Nor is the freedom which he preaches civic, political freedom, for it is not his task and his mission to struggle for or defend that. He is in fact working for it (without, perhaps, knowing it, or wanting to do so) through all that he does on behalf of the divine dignity of the person, in a much more radical sense than if he championed it in a political struggle. But political freedom for its own sake would have had no power to move his heart, since he knows that a man who is merely politically free can still remain the slave of those powers from which the liberating message of Christianity and the deed of the Cross are striving to redeem him. The freedom which Paul has in mind is that freedom which alone gives free choice its meaning, and of which all political freedom can only be an earthly reflection; the freedom into which we can be redeemed only by Jesus Christ.

Left to ourselves, we are prisoners under the powers of this world and this age; subject to fate, to the Law, to death, to sin as a bondage to our own fear-ridden, blinkered, arrogant self-assertion against God. Left to ourselves, we are prisoners of our own finitude, and always ready to defend our own captivity, within the workings of our guilt-ruined hearts, as the very summit of our nobility and excellence. We are the unfree. When the Spirit of God, his convincing truth, his power, his life, are given to us, by faith in the Lord's victorious death, then we become free. Free from the Law, from sin, from death, and from all the other enslaving powers of this world. But the place which belongs to this liberating Spirit, the Where upon which he bestows his freedom, is the Church. For in her holds sway the *Pneuma* who makes us free. The Church is the community of those who are called to the freedom of God, so that her law is called the law of liberty. The New Jerusalem is the free woman, and we are the children of the free woman. The Church is the Where for this pneumatic freedom, its concrete existence, its bodiliness, the sign of its immersion within the constraint of the world and the world's finitude.

We cannot here go any further into this scriptural doctrine of freedom as the fundamental saving benefit of redemption in the Church. But what is needed—if only it could be done by such stutterings as these—is that in the living hearts of teachers, any teachers who are teachers of genuine Christianity, the truth should be written that a Christian is a free man; and that such teachers have got to live and exemplify and proclaim a Christianity which will manifest this both in itself and to the Church. True, this free Christianity can only be helped to attain a concrete and convincing existence if the person concerned has experienced how desperately un-

free man is without the liberating Spirit of God. But is it possible for man to overlook this? Today, of all times? Can he escape the impression that political liberation almost always means merely an exchange of tyrannies, not the end of tyranny? Does he not have the experience of chaos and compulsion around him and in him? Of slavery to heredity, to the depths of his unconscious, to the supposedly planless forces of history, to the mass mind, to the spirit of the age, to the self-destructive element which does its work of negation even in the most sublime operations of his mind and culture; the slavery of being at the mercy of the chaotic power of his instinctual life, the power of the anguish and insecurity of his existence? Does he not have the experience of death, installed, like its inmost essence, at the heart of every live thing in this world, and seeming to summon up all life merely so as to have more, and ever more fearful, death? Does not every creature groan to be delivered? Does not every creature know that it is in subjection to vanity? (Rom. 8.21.)

But we are very apt to inhabit an indefinable in-between state. We repress our awareness that the human situation is a state of being suspended over nothing when experienced without the redeeming act of God; and at the same time we are incapable of really and truly believing with our whole hearts in this saving message of liberation from the deadly powers of earthly finitude and guilt, in all its radiant greatness and glory. We are people who are under a compulsion to think (until we simply can't any more) that things really aren't so bad here (so long as you don't actually have cancer or something else of which you are miserably dying, shoved away into a hospital so that the whole business won't go and get on other people's nerves), and that the reason why you

mustn't actually deny the after-life is that it would, after all, be quite all right as a sort of additional compensation for the hardships of this one, but (though we don't quite admit this) we are quite prepared to do without it if we have to.

But what we Christians ought to be is men of radical honesty; we ought to feel and experience, without disguise or anaesthetic, the bitterness of being a prisoner of finitude and death-dealing guilt. Only then can our lives become that song of triumph which is sung by the man who has been set free: I know in the very depths of my being that neither death nor life nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8,38f.) This triumphal song of our Christian existence, which is sung primarily not in words but in the actions of our lives, may reach the ears of those still imprisoned in the emptiness of their despair only in the form of self-disciplined patience, or honest decency, or unpretentious loyalty, or a strangely cheerful calm in the midst of tears and anxieties; indeed, it may well be that many are, by their lives, singing this psalm of thanksgiving for freedom, who themselves think that they are not believers, who do not know that in the ultimate, honest depths of their hearts they do believe in the message of freedom in the love of God. All this does not alter the fact that this freedom, giving onto God's infinity, does exist; that it is promised to us and given to us in the gift of God's Spirit, who is poured out into our hearts as divine freedom; the Spirit of God, who is given to us tangibly in the Church, in her word and her sacraments, so that our liberated lives, too, may bear witness for the Church as the sacrament of the freedom of the children of God.

There is still another sense, a quite different one (at least

in the first instance), in which we must speak of freedom in the Church. And freedom in this sense is one of the most essential things for which people must be educated. We do, no doubt, educate them with a view to the observance of the Christian norms. We are working to form people in such a way that Christian principles shall have become part of their very flesh and blood. But if we do achieve this, have we then done everything that a teacher is meant to do?

The answer to this question depends on the answer to another one: Whether what the individual has to do in his individual free acts of decision is simply and solely to apply a general norm to a concrete case, in the sense that the concrete case is in fact no more than a single instance of a general, objectively stateable norm. If the answer to this is No, then it is clear that a teacher has not only to train a person in obedience to the universal law, but also (however indirectly this may have to be done) in the discovery of that individual law which applies to the individual insofar as he is precisely *not* a mere instance of the universal. But Christianity is, if ever there was one, the Faith which takes each separate individual seriously and treats him as sacred to an unsurpassable degree; the religion which recognizes the conscience of the individual, the uniqueness of the judgment passed upon him, and his indestructible validity for all eternity. This individual is no mere single instance of the universal. However much it may be the case that, in what he is and hence in what he does, he is bound to move within that universal essential structure which expresses itself, conceptually and prescriptively, in terms of universal propositions and norms, he is nevertheless not exhaustively accounted for as a particular instance of the universal. He is something more. And hence he has also got to become something more.

The Church, and Christianity insofar as it is something that can be uttered by the Church in universal propositions valid for all, cannot exercise immediate control, by their laws, over this special unique singularity of the individual. They can preach to him on the text "Become what you are." They can tell him, in the universal norms of the natural law and of positive divine law, of general structures and lines of demarcation within which his own uniqueness will have to grow and fulfill itself if it is not to go to ruin. But the Church cannot directly tell an individual, by the content of her commandments, what he is and what he is meant to be and to become. Here we have an area of freedom for which the individual has got to be educated; a dimension of human existence in which the individual has an immediacy in relation to God into which even the divinely instituted community of salvation, the Church, does not reach directly. Here, all that the Church and the Christian teacher can do is to educate for responsibility in regard to this freedom which they simply cannot, and do not wish to, take from the individual human being.

Here we have an area in which we have got to cultivate the courage to be individual, to take sole responsibility, to accept one's mission even when it does not meet with general applause. Here we have got to cultivate the conviction that a particular decision in the life of an individual, a nation or some other historically significant community is not necessarily and automatically right, historically creative and willed by God simply because it does not conflict with the general norms of Christianity and the Church. Here is an area where the individual Christian has to be educated for that freedom which involves a responsibility that cannot be passed on to someone else; responsibility for one's choice of a profession,

a responsibility for one's individual religious life that cannot be adequately discharged by taking refuge in mere collective piety and churchiness.

Here is the ground on which a teacher must take his stand and offer resistance to any invasion of the Christian and Church sphere by the forces of mass anonymity; against flight into anonymous, irresponsible membership of an ecclesiastical crowd; against the notion that the best Christian is one who finds everything in the Church fine and splendid; against the idea that the Christian ideal is to have everything as uniform as possible, controlled as centralistically as possible from above, as though the principle of subsidiarity did not apply in the Church. Here is where a Christian must be educated for freedom in the Church in such a way that he will recognize and take account of the necessity for having a public opinion in the Church, and again that he will recognize and exercise a certain right of association within the Church.

It is here that a Christian teacher has his finest scope for educating for freedom. Ultimately, education is by no means a mere preaching of universal norms and training in the observance of sacred laws. Education means helping a person so to discover his own unique individuality that he may become worthy to exist for all eternity in the sight of God as that individual. Only we Christians are really serious in believing that we human beings have an eternal validity. From this follows all the dignity and all the incalculable and unfathomable greatness of our responsibility for such a vocation. But this eternally valid thing, which we are constructing here in time, is not the mere reproduction of an abstract ideal but the sheerly unique love of God who

calls each person by his own name, and the sheerly unique love of the *individuum ineffabile* for God and for all other eternally valid spiritual persons.

It is not possible to make the production of such a person the direct goal of education; for it is not possible to exercise direct control over this unique thing by teaching and enforcing norms. Basically, all one can do to teach this liberated freedom of the individual is to exemplify it, in a way which awakens in other people, by a mysterious sympathy, the courage to take hold on their own uniqueness. And this does not mean the isolated and isolating self-centredness of the self-satisfied nineteenth-century individualist, but the uniqueness of a man who loves away from himself, towards God and his neighbours, in that way which belongs to him alone. There is such a thing. For in heaven there are no mediocrities. They would not be worthy of eternity. And what, ultimately, we are educating for is the man of eternity, the unique man. Educating by the fact that we exemplify this divine life of liberated freedom in our lives, in truth and love. In the truth of Christ and of his Church, who frees us into full reality, not allowing us to settle down in a mere corner of reality; and in that loving courage by which a man accepts himself and his destiny as coming from God, and receives in them the endless life of God himself.

7

The Student of Theology: The Problems of His Training Today

1. *The Need for a Re-examination of the Question*

WE SEEM TO BE ARRIVING at a time when we should make an energetic reassessment of the training of candidates for the Catholic priesthood. When we speak here of the training of Catholic theologians, we mean their "scientific" or, to speak more circumspectly, their "academic" training, as distinct from their education as a whole. We may observe that there have been some slow stirrings of a reappraisal already. Evangelical theology has been grappling with the problem¹ (though here what occupies the foreground is the problem of the position of the theologian as between the Church on

¹ H. Bacht, "Zur Reform des Theologiestudiums in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands," in SZ (1953-4), pp. 388-92.

the one hand and the university faculty on the other, which is something which, from the nature of the case, cannot apply in the same way to us). In Catholic Germany Bishop Reuss, rector of the Mainz seminary, has thrown open these questions for discussion,² though here it is rather in a context concerned chiefly with the religious character-training of theologians. So there seems to be a feeling that it is time once more to reconsider the training of theological students. Not only because we do not know how much time we may have left for such things. Let us quietly ignore this side of the question, leaving it to the prophets and apocalyptic visionaries. There are reasons enough without that.

2. *The Passing of the Age of the Enlightenment*

The system of theological training and education that we have here in Central Europe is an offspring of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century. It has, of course, a greater and more Christian ancestry as well. But what differentiates this system from that of earlier Christian ages—that is, its “scientific” character, involving a number of “specialists”—is the result of adapting it to the progress then being made in science and its methods in the other faculties.

There is, of course, no question here of attaching blame to anyone in history. To speak, in this connection, of a wrong course as having been taken in the past would mean overlooking the fact that such a course will only become a wrong course if we today refuse to make any advance on it. During

² J. M. Reuss, “Priesterliche Ausbildung heute,” in *WW*, 9 (1954), pp. 85-105.

the last century and a half, if the priest was to make any impact he had to be "educated," meaning *academically* educated. But what this meant was that he had to be scientifically educated in the sense that applies to a modern university and its organization of research and specialization. Thus it was as a reflection of the general shape of things in the secular intellectual world that modern theological studies arose, insofar as they differ from those of earlier times. This specific character is not an effect of the inner nature of theology as such. Once more, this does not involve any charge against it; it is not, in itself, a reason for regarding it as suspect. Theology is a science. (The meaning and limits of this statement were already the subject of long and penetrating examination in the Middle Ages.) Hence it may very well bear the same general features as the other sciences in their various stages of historical development. (All one might ask is on just what grounds it is taken as settled that *every* priest and candidate for the priesthood has got to do theological "science" in this exact sense. But we shall be coming back to this question later on from a different angle.)

But if theology *has* in fact shared in the development of the sciences and their academic methods, the idea cannot be rejected *a priori* that it will continue to do this today and in the future (in its own way, of course, and its own degree).

But the meaning and limitations of academic study in the university have now arrived at a critical point; the *universitas litterarum* is bursting apart under the pressure of endless specialist subdivisions; it is in danger of becoming a mere blanket organization for a number of specialist schools; what it provides is gradually becoming a mere specialist training for "technicians" in individual sciences. It is becoming ques-

tionable whether training of this sort can still be the vehicle of culture; the sheer material to be learned piles up to such a point that no ordinarily gifted person can measure up to it, so that a middling talent is forced either to leave the university aside in favour of some higher technical training school, or else drag down the actual "academic" level to the character and level of a school of that sort.

The further question has arisen whether the "leaders of the people" are still going to be academically trained persons, or whether the latter, having been forced out of such leadership—or, indeed, having freely abandoned it—are now mere technicians, "experts," for the efficient carrying-out of plans, of intellectual and political schemes and choices, made by men of a very different stamp from that of the "academic" world.

Whether this development be good or bad, inevitable or (to some degree at least) not so, the question arises: What does it involve for theology, if a change is taking place in those generally accepted ideals by which it has organized itself for the last hundred and fifty years, and which it has for some time (as always happens in the middle of a period) regarded as self-evident and normal? If what Catholic theology is doing is not training expert specialists in a science, but training priests, i.e., men called by God to be pastors (in secular terms, leaders), then the fact that academically trained people are no longer assumed to be the born leaders of the people must provide theology with particular food for thought.

Moreover, there is also the question whether the university in its normal activities is *in general* making sufficient account of the profound changes taking place in the mental habits of

this age, or whether it is limping far behind. It rather looks, and not only in the natural sciences, as though the real centres of research, progress and intellectual initiative have moved from the universities to the laboratories of big business, to the training-centres of various associations (trade unions etc.), to brains trusts and so forth.

Is it inherently necessary that academic theology should be the last of all to take account of these changes and to ask itself what their significance may be for it? Do we not need to ask ourselves squarely whether *Deus scientiarum Dominus*, by which theological studies (note—*academic* theological studies, not every kind) were reformed under Pius XI, while certainly representing a victory for the notion of such academic studies prevailing in Central Europe, was not really a victory that came too late, already out of date by the time it came, a time when its scientific ideals in the training of theologians were already beginning to be an open question once more?

3. *Change in Aptitude amongst Theological Students*

If I am not mistaken, a change is being observed today in the aptitude of young theologians in comparison with their older colleagues. One might choose to speak in the role of *laudator temporis acti* and say that the level of aptitude had gone down. This would not be a merely baseless assertion. Theology is obviously being affected, like other fields, by the undeniable (temporary) shift away from arts towards science.

On top of this there is the fact that a theological career used to be the most obvious one for children of above-

average ability from country areas, being the course of academic study most easily available to them. This has to a great extent ceased to be the case. A country child can embark more easily now on other academic courses; theological vocations from country areas have diminished, in percentage, in comparison with those from towns; talent from the country seems also to have diminished in comparative quality.

But it would ultimately be a mistake to describe the present phenomenon as a *lowering* in the level of ability. What has changed enormously is the *kind* of ability. Young theologians today—even, and indeed especially, the best of them—do not approach their studies with the attitude of young intellectuals interested in theological problems.

Even at an earlier time, of course, a Catholic theological student used to do this less than his Protestant colleague. What he wanted was to be a *priest*. The priesthood and the pastoral care of ordinary country people represented an ideal and goal to him that had very little to do with anything academic or professional. But all the same, if we discount the very bottom level, which always remains the same and does not to any extent set the general tone, it is still true that intellectual problems, scholarship, research, grappling with the problems of the age at the level of rational and historical discussion were a very important motive for the best of our young theologians in the past, and a significant element in their theological studies. Of course this still exists today, because something of the kind will always exist. But its exemplars have shrunk in numbers, and the young theologians no longer see it as holding a position of leadership.

One simple proof of this is the low recruitment amongst the rising generation for academic theology as an actual

career. Or ask yourself how many young theologians look on their professors as people with a determining influence on the Church, at least second to the bishops themselves, and not rather as mere providers of "training"—a necessary evil? Can we not observe that our young theologians draw the ideas on which they really live, to which they have an immediate, spontaneous relationship, not from their academic course but rather from books, periodicals and discussion groups of a quite different character? Is this explicable unless we say that the intellectual type of today's theology student no longer has the affinity it used to have to the scholarly ideal of the university—in other words, that it must have changed? "Scholarship," "an academic career," "the writing of learned books" etc. are no longer, even for the best of our younger generation of theologians, those who set the tone for the rest, the catchwords that express their ideals or provide a type for their own personal cast of mind and character. This is not the place for a description of their new, qualitatively different type of ability. This would take us too far afield, though to characterize it by its "unscholarliness," the one point that has been stressed here, is to be very negative and onesided—indeed, perhaps unjust.

But do we not have to take account of this change in type? Shall we not have to try to understand the new type aright, *not* measure it primarily by the standard of the intellectual aptitude of an earlier age, and thus *not* denigrate it as a decline in the level of ability? Shall we then not have to ask what kind of theology is appropriate to this type, so that it will be able to absorb this theology into its own substance as man and as priest?

4. *Lack of a Theological Central Point*

There is a third thing to be said, which comes as a consequence of the first two causes here given: Theology today is split into a large number of specialisms, with no centre to the theological course which can really establish itself and so be effective as education and not as mere specialist training. *Deus scientiarum Dominus* did indeed see this danger, but did not really overcome it; it is dominated, as a whole, by its efforts to provide a "scientific" training in an encyclopedic sense, so that, e.g., a South American or an Indian does "Oriental Theology" or "biblical Greek" as his own special subject (on paper, at least). Every specialism in theological education is striving today to present itself in as "scientific" a light as possible. More and more specialists keep up the surface pressure, wanting to establish themselves in independent disciplines.

The first result is that the average theological student just doesn't keep abreast. If we really look at the thing honestly and coolly, we have to say that *academic* teaching is teaching with the object of making someone, within its special subject, capable, in terms of learning and training, of taking his place among those who are working to advance that subject. It is this goal, and this alone, that distinguishes a university from a school for advanced specialists. Because of this, there have to be, of course, as many specialists in a university as there are lines of advance in research, determined by the respective subjects "*in themselves*" and differentiated according to subject and method. Now, the academic teaching in the theological faculties of the universities is going to be done academically in this sense (no matter what modifications and

omissions may be imposed by lack of time and the good sense of professors with a personal ideal of education focused on the priesthood).

In itself, this is an acceptable way to do it. For there has to be theological research, and hence academic training for it. But is it something for the great mass of theological students, who want to be and are to be priests later on, and not the next generation of theological research workers? How is the young theologian ever to master all the multiplicity of theological specialisms, when they are set before him in *this* way? Considered as a subject of academic research, it is already the case that theology can be regarded as *one* science in scarcely more than name only. The most striking way in which this shows itself is that its various branches (e.g., in Rome) are already established as separate faculties or canonical "institutes" with a similar organization.

Or try the following thought-experiment: Think of the level reached in philosophy and theology by someone who has been through high school, and who is really interested in these subjects; think, on the other hand, of what needs to be included in an *academic* course as direct training to qualify a man to do theological research, considering the multiplicity of theological disciplines, the development of theology, and the still greater unfulfilled tasks which still await it and are indeed long overdue. Then ask yourself whether there is really no place for something *in between*, a course of instruction which would be neither the first of these nor the second. Does the high-school course in theology really leave off where the academic course begins? Don't say, "But it really isn't as bad as that: in practice the theology course does take account of reality, and fills in the educational gap between school

theology and academic theology." Of course it does. But because it has to aim at the academic level too it only half does it; it does only half the one job, at most, and only a quarter of the other. If it were not primarily an academic course, it would not be split up into this mass of academic specialisms, all being done *as far as possible* in the most scholarly and "scientific" way. The consequence is that the poor theological student, who, with his qualitatively different (not merely or primarily qualitatively inferior) aptitude, does not in the least want to be a "scholar," does not get much out of this course. Drearly, and with no more than a half-understanding at most, he swots up, schoolboy fashion, a meagre extract of all this scholarly material, mostly failing to see the wood for the sheer mass of trees. Then the examinations come, and the unfortunate learned professor finds himself forced to come down from the heights of his scholarly academic theology at last and apply something more than tolerance in judging the results, if he is not going to have too huge a percentage of the candidates failing.⁸

⁸ Cf. Reuss, p. 102: "Candidates for the priesthood, when theological students, are simply not in a position to make an intensive scientific study of all fields of theology and all the specialist theological sciences; yet the lectures demand that they should. Not even the most gifted student can manage it. Much too much material is provided in lectures and textbooks for them to be able to do it. If you require them to master it, what you are doing is to induce them to cram for examinations. . . . With so much material set before them, they simply cannot work through it all in a scholarly way: they have to cram. The fault is not theirs. Do not point in refutation to the high incidence of good marks obtained by theological students. They are not always evidence of achievement but sometimes more in the nature of a consolation prize, awarded from the heart rather than the head. . . ."

The extent to which the splintering of academic specialization is unhelpful in achieving the goal of educating candidates for the priesthood also appears in the damage that it does to *the specialist studies themselves*. To give two small examples (please note that exceptions, willingly admitted, prove the rule): *biblical theology* (insofar as it does exist amongst us as a branch of exegesis) has so far done appallingly little to fertilize dogmatics, which goes on its way in blithe unconcern, handling its traditional canon of problems; and the reason why there is little biblical theology amongst us is that the exegete is scared of venturing on the slippery ice of dogmatics. Exegesis and dogmatics are two different specialized studies, you see. How many of the questions raised and categories used and so on in modern *philosophy* (Catholic included) have found their way into any treatment of dogma? Precious few. Philosophy (modern, especially) and dogmatics are two different special subjects. But if this is harmful even to these disciplines "in themselves," how much more unsuitable is it for a theological student who is going on to be, not a research worker in some particular discipline, but a man in the midst of life and a preacher and witness of the whole of God's word?⁴ No reasonable reader is going to conclude from what is said here that it is supposed that the whole of theology can be cooked together and served up to theological students as a one-course meal. But the way that their training is being done today does

⁴ Cf. Reuss, p. 101: "A theology that has only been acquired intellectually is only in the understanding and not in the heart. It does not suffice for bearing witness, because it does not enable one to proclaim it by deeds but at most by words; and then only by words that reach only the heads and not the hearts of those to whom they are addressed, and hence cannot awaken any life in them."

raise a *question*, since its having set itself an ultimately academic goal has led to a degree of specialization which is doing damage to the theological students whom we have in relation to the goal that we ought to have.

5. *"Scholarship" and the Training of Theological Students*

We should, of course, look more closely at what we have to train theological students for. Certainly not to be theological scholars, but to be priests and pastors. This will no doubt be generally agreed, but with the qualification swiftly added that scholarship is in fact a means for training them to be pastoral priests. For, it will be said, only a priest who can "work in a scholarly way"⁵ will, in his later practice, be able to deal with new problems as they confront him.

We now have to ask, in all sober common sense, what is meant here by "scholarly" and what is meant by "dealing with new problems."

If "working in a scholarly way" means that the priest has got to be able to think clearly; that he has got to have assimilated the substance of the faith that he preaches, really taken an interior hold on it with a clear mind and the vital force of his heart; that, on this basis, he has got to have a certain instinct of faith about new problems and to know, and be able to use, the right sources to instruct himself about them; that he has got to have learned enough to be able to do some learning of new things later on, with ease and assurance—then it is true that he has got to be able to "work in

⁵ Cf. Reuss, p. 100.

a scholarly way." But this is not what is generally called "scholarship." For every kind of schooling and instruction has, *mutatis mutandis*, this goal in view.

But if being able to "work in a scholarly way" means to do scholarly work, i.e., to be able to contribute, according to correct methods, to the advancement of theological knowledge, then most priests cannot work in a scholarly way. Nor is it any shame to admit this, any more than it is amongst doctors, engineers, high-school teachers etc. But if the theology course is aiming, as its goal, at the ability to do scholarly work in this sense, then in most cases it does not attain its goal. But what it does do is prevent itself from reaching that educational goal which really is worth aiming at, and attainable, for all theological students; even though this latter training will not have the effect of enabling a priest, later on, to deal *alone* with all the really "new" problems that may arise. So if we are going to give words their right meaning, then I do not think that we can regard "ability to do scholarly work" as a means for training priests.

Saying *positively* what the concrete content of a training for the pastoral priesthood has to be is more difficult than is generally supposed.

We need to be clear that it is very easy here to fall into a practical vicious circle: If you are not trained for something, you don't do it later on in practice; because it isn't done in practice (and it is from the practical situation that we deduce the goal of our training), it is thought that there is no need to provide training for it. If we observe, for instance, how much of our pastoral approach lacks the character of an offensive; how little success it has in gaining a hearing from the new pagans, even amongst those classes which are educa-

tionally at a lower level than the average of the clergy, then we shall not be so easily convinced that we know clearly what we need to be aiming at in theological education, and that we are not overlooking educational goals simply because they have not actually been envisaged, even though they need to be.

It would be possible to show from many other aspects too that it is high time to re-examine our theological course with reference to its structure and the goal it is aiming at. One might ask whether the way in which theology is in practice conducted takes enough account of the fact that even the most scholarly and scientific theology has no meaning unless it is something more than a branch of learning assimilated with one's head alone. (I was recently told by a parish priest, doctor of theology, how oddly disconcerted he was when, after doing his theological studies in Germany, he went to the Angelicum in Rome and found himself, for the first time, beginning a lecture with prayer.) One might ask whether, as they are in practice conducted, theology and Christian philosophy have not diverged too far from each other, so that theology has become far too positivist and Christian philosophy (in virtue of its "relative independence") far too neutral. One might make a comparison between what theology does provide and what it ought to provide if it is to be a basis for proclaiming the word to the world of today, and go on from this to enquire what sort of scheme of theological studies would be needed to do something to reduce this far too enormous gap.

I suggest, in fact, that you start from the realization, which has nothing in common with relativism and historicism, that every age (meaning every *age*, not some fashion lasting a few

years) has to have *its own theology* (and has had it, from the time of the Fathers to that of post-Tridentine Baroque). Then try to gauge the gap between the general intellectual situation in the world of today and the situation which it has replaced—approximately, the Baroque world; then measure the gap between a late Baroque treatment of dogmatic theology and a modern one (meaning an average one, such as Diekamp's, Pohle-Gierens' or Hugon's etc.). It seems to me that if anyone does not admit that the second gap is too small in relation to the first, that, in fact, despite all its learning, the modern period has not done the job in theology for its own age that earlier theologies did for their age, then that person is past helping. It might even, possibly, be recognized that the scientific character of theology, which is concentrated chiefly, in exegesis, on matters of philology and textual criticism and, in dogmatics, on the history of dogma, sometimes looks desperately like an alibi for dodging the more difficult task, which is to work out how the old, eternally changeless message can be rethought and reformulated in terms of the intellectual situation of the present day so as to make it genuinely assimilable to a sufficient degree. Perhaps work on these lines would also produce results in the way of seeing what is needed for the planning and development of theological studies.

All that has been said so far was meant to indicate and—so far as its brevity permitted—to establish only one thing: that it is time for a serious reconsideration of the right form to be taken by the process of training theological students. I am now going on to give a few ideas about the direction in which the solution to this problem may be found.

6. *Suggestions on the Direction in which to Move*

(1) In what has gone before I have dealt with the necessity for raising once again the question of the training of theological students. The first conclusion to be drawn is that the normal training of a theological student today (meaning of one who is going to do ordinary pastoral work) can no longer be "academic" in the *strict* sense of the word. This does not of course mean that it should not take place at the university. There would be no reason for this. A student who is going to teach physics in a school studies at the university, though one imagines that by the end of the course his knowledge will be very far from sufficient to enable him to work as a scientist making a real contribution to research in, say, nuclear physics. We need to be clear that theology too has developed in such a way that a man who has acquired the knowledge necessary for normal priestly and pastoral practice (and spent such time on doing so as the theological course demands and allows) does not and cannot possess that kind of "scholarly" knowledge which is the purpose of the *university* as such, considered as a place for scholarly research and for the direct training of the next generation of research workers. Purely in terms of the material to be known, the development of theology, like that of other disciplines, has made it impossible that he should. *The identification between the training of a pastoral priest and of a scholarly theologian must be abolished.* Today we can no longer aim at these two goals *per modum unius*. (It is in itself a secondary question whether the future "scholar" should begin by going through the same training as the others and then do his own, or

whether there should be two different courses of training from the start.)⁶ It is only if we are resolute and ruthlessly honest in abandoning this ideal of identification, which can no longer be applied today, that we shall be free to discern the proper goal to be set before the training of future pastors.

(2) The goal to be aimed at in the theology provided for future priests and pastors will have to involve a lightening, a concentration, and a deepening of the course of studies in comparison with what has been in use hitherto.

Lightening: We can spare the theological student a great deal of what is, for him, superfluous ballast of learned material, which he cannot really master nor make any use of later on. Obviously, a man whose abilities are both above average and, as to their quality, of a specifically *scholarly* nature, can make use later on, even in pastoral work, of what he has acquired earlier in the course of his learned studies. But the abilities of the majority are not above average, and in still fewer, today, are they specifically scholarly (rational and analytical). And hence, in practice, a great deal of what a theological student has to apply himself to today is just dead weight, of which he ought to be relieved (which is not to say that *he* is called upon to decide what is and is not included in this).

Concentration: The existing mass of special subjects should be pulled together and regrouped from points of view that are priestly and related to pastoral practice; these need to be thought out precisely and radically. It ought to be clear that not everything that a future priest has to learn need necessarily be communicated to him by formal teaching (an obvi-

⁶ Cf. the similar proposals made by Reuss.

ous principle, constantly contradicted in practice). How this radically new conception of special subjects might be arrived at, and what would emerge from it in the form of actual departments of study, is a question which obviously cannot be sorted out here. It cannot, of course, be done by eliminating some of the existing subjects and then leaving the others as they are. It may even be that such a new conception of an organically articulated unity, with one single theology structured according to its proper divisions in such a way as to preserve its unity, will bring to light a number of themes that have gone unnoticed in current theology. We need only, for instance, observe the (relatively) exaggerated amplitude with which some themes in dogma are treated, while others, dogmatically very important ones, are entirely lacking such treatment.

Deepening: If theology keeps its eyes resolutely fixed on the goal of giving today's priests and pastors what they need, then it will appear, perhaps very quickly, that this goal cannot of course be reached by giving a cut-down version of "scientific" theology as it has been hitherto. Rather, it will be seen that theology (dogmatic and moral especially) needs in many respects to be deepened, so that it can be given to theological students in the way in which they need it. It is, for instance, of no use (or very little use) to a future pastor to have acquired merely the formal framework of concepts, the facts and proofs of the *history* of dogma, taught to him out of theological sources. He cannot, when the time comes, preach that. To think that today all the rest automatically follows from this, given that one has learned it and then adds a certain amount of piety and familiarity with standard spiritual writing, is simply a mistake. Ask yourself: Can a curate

give a sermon to a modern urban population, a sermon that they will be able to assimilate mentally and religiously, on the Trinity, on the descent of Christ into hell, on the virginity of our Lady (*in partu* especially), on indulgences, on hell, on the particular judgement and innumerable other themes, once he has made a thorough study of one of the standard dogmatic manuals? I think the honest answer is No. None of them offers that depth of content which is what matters precisely for a pastor in his preaching. This cannot be established here. But I do assert it with all possible seriousness: a more unambiguously pastoral orientation of theology towards testifying to and proclaiming the Faith to people as they really are today would compel a deepening of it: and this means ultimately a real increase in "scholarliness," a "scholarship" which would not indeed need to be imposed on theological students but would have to have been achieved beforehand at the professors' level in theological research. It would quickly appear that a genuinely "kerygmatic theology" calls for *more* scholarship on the part of the teacher, who then needs to demand correspondingly less on the part of his pupils.

(3) For a course of studies of this sort it would not only have to be clearly seen that its task is not to train new contributors to theological research; it would not only have to be realized that theology for pastors is not simply "scientific" theology forced by the time-factor and the mental potentialities of its hearers to cut itself down to something more primitive, but a relatively self-subsistent form of instruction by which the Faith is communicated to those who are to proclaim and testify to it. In shaping such a course of studies, one would have to have the courage to face squarely the fact

that it is not possible, in the normal course, even to provide a complete training for all the different kinds of pastors that are needed today.

The recognition of this fact has for long been taken for granted in other professions in the modern world. It is necessary that in theology it should not merely be taken account of *in obliquo*, here and there, under the pressure of immediate facts, but that it should be accepted from the start in principle, as part of the plan itself. What I mean is this: Everybody knows that even a very good general practitioner is not a surgeon; a GP sends certain cases to a clinic without thereby feeling that he has been disgraced and had aspersions cast on his ability; again, there are fiscal problems which a perfectly competent lawyer cannot see his way through, so he refers them to an expert. And courses of professional training allow for this unavoidable fact of modern life, either by going on from a general basic course to various specialized courses or by giving a training that is from the start directed towards various different qualifications.

In theology alone we go on cherishing the blissfully optimistic notion that anyone who has done the normal theological course of training common to everybody is going to be qualified, at least in the main, for every branch of pastoral work (apart from the higher professional levels of academic theology).

Is it certain that this optimism is justified? A curate has to be a veritable jack-of-all-trades; he is qualified to teach religion (other teachers, whose subjects are not really any more difficult than his, study for this work alone quite as long as he has studied; and they are not required to be qualified for anything else); he is qualified to preach (the idea

obviously is that this is roughly the same as teaching the Catechism); he is qualified to give spiritual direction in the confessional; to evangelize our modern pagans (who is to do it, if not he? Or isn't this one of a priest's duties?); he possesses the art of adult leadership (works in the young men's society etc.); is expert in ecclesiastical administration; knows how to get on with ordinary people and with the subtle problems of the educated. He learned it all in his course of studies, which is the same for everyone. One may well wonder that it works out as satisfactorily as it to some extent does.

But would it not be better if it were made clear to the clergy from the start (the layman practises this already, when he betakes himself to a priest, so far as he can and is not hindered from doing so) that a pastor simply does not have to be able to do everything himself for which a pastor is needed; that it is obvious that, in many cases, he will send a person in need of pastoral help to a "specialist," without this being a comedown for himself? If this conviction and this practical policy were really to become obvious and taken for granted, would it not then be possible to discern more clearly what belongs to the basic pastoral training for all pastors and what is a matter for *specialist* training, in which we should not have everyone being trained for anything and everything but each one for his own line?

If this were done, then perhaps a *basic training* for pastoral priests might come into existence which would be so limited in quantity that it would be able to be as profound in quality as it needs to be if it is to serve our needs today. The training of "pastoral specialists" (in whatever numbers were needed) could then be done afterwards with the same degree of intensity as is applied in other professions. For the urgency of

having pastoral experts of this kind, and of training them, would then no longer be disguised by the general impression that really any priest can do this kind of thing, and has learned about it in his general training, insofar as there is any real need for it in practice.

The carrying out of this principle would of course lead to numerous changes in the organization of pastoral work in large cities; we cannot go into this here. In short, even pastoral work has become so subdivided today that one man cannot and need not be equipped for all of it. This is a fact of which our training should take account from the start, in its very structure. The "basic pastor" (as distinct from the specialist) would not then be able to do everything, but what he needed to be able to do he would do really well.

(4) I said earlier that it is in itself a matter of indifference—purely in terms of principle—whether the scholarly specialist training of those who are going to contribute to theological research is done as an addition following on the training of future pastors or exists separately from the start as a special course of training alongside normal theology. This scholarly theological education has most certainly got to exist in any case. Not only because even professors of theology and the science of theology are amongst this world's necessary evils, but both because, as has already been said, a pastoral course in theology will demand a heightened measure of scholarly preparation on the part of those who teach it, and also because there will have to be pastors whose practical work as specialists requires this scientific training, and whose formation could consequently be included within this scholarly-scientific course of studies. For this reason, and also because the type of theological student who does have schol-

arly abilities (but *only* he) can "make something" of this kind of training even in pastoral work, it will in practice be more advisable to have two different courses of training from the start: the pastoral and the scholarly.

Thus we have arrived in the course of these considerations at an idea not unknown to the systems of study in the great religious orders. For they used to, and do, have a two-way division of this kind in their theological studies. So what we should be doing is renewing an old tradition. Only we should have to be careful about two things. The course with the pastoral character would have to be boldly conceived *as precisely that*. If I am not mistaken, in cases where it does exist it has lost much too much of its own character through being made to approximate much too much to scholarly theology, with the idea of having "educated" pastors equipped with "academic" knowledge. Again, this pastoral type of course has often been thought of too much as the course for less able candidates. Of course there are, in all situations, differences in ability. And of course the "scholarly" course should receive only such theological students as belong, in terms of quantitative ability, amongst the more gifted. But it is not this quantitative difference in ability that justifies the difference in training; we do not find two different courses in medicine, merely because there are abler and less able medical students. What differentiates our two courses is their educational goal.

For this reason, again, it would make sense to have students of high ability in the "merely" pastoral course as well. If this pastorally determined theology is going to be really pastoral, and not merely academic theology cut down to match a lower level of mental ability, then even a very gifted person would have no need to feel undervalued by being

included in such a course, even though men of lesser ability would still be able to "keep up with it" perfectly well. There would be no harm at all if the impression were to arise (so long as it accorded with the facts) that the "pastoral" course was in many respects better than the "scholarly" one; not indeed in terms of learned speculation, but of existential penetration into the message of the Gospel itself.

(5) We also need to ask afresh how we can do still more than has been done to bring into closer relationship theology and the spiritual life, theological instruction and the personal formation of the student's character in which he becomes a genuinely priestly person. It is not that lectures should be sermons and the lecture-hall turn into a chapel. But of all sciences, theology (in whatever way it is taught and thought about) simply is the one to which, as a science, existential acceptance is most indispensable. But it is the case that among theologians, young and old alike, theology is often very undevotional (this is not a question of the private lives of theologians, which would not affect their theology), while piety (in the seminaries) is very untheological. Given a pastorally determined theology with the courage to jettison a certain amount of "scientific" ballast, closing this gap would surely be possible. If for no other reason, because there would be more time available for helping theological students to appropriate what they are learning as part of their personal spiritual life.

(6) If what has been said so far has been rightly understood, the reader will not want to make the principal accusation and objection which always threatens reflections and proposals of this kind: namely, that the whole thing will tend to lower the intellectual requirements, the "scholarliness," of modern theological training.

Anyone who does want to bring this charge should consider the following points:

(a) We have to distinguish between the "level" that is maintained on paper, or that applies to the professor, and the level that can normally be attained inside the heads of those who listen to him. It is not helpful to judge a scheme of study on the basis of the first sense, if the level in the second sense is considerably below it.

(b) The "level" required, on the professor's side, for a lecture in pastorally determined theology would have to be higher rather than lower than the present one. For our present theology (as given by the professors) does not owe its remoteness from life, its lack of vitality and its want of formative power to an excess of scientific scholarship in the professor, but to a deficiency. That is to say, he is bringing into play a fund of learning of a formal scholastic or historicist kind, which is indeed something he has got to be able to do; but he is doing it without getting through and beyond it into the questions which are raised against the subject of his merely learned discourse by religious people and by this present age.

(c) But the fact that the professor will be working at this higher level does not have to mean that, in pursuing what he has come to know, his pupils in the pastoral course will have to follow the same paths as he has trodden and make the same efforts as he has made. You can perfectly well initiate someone into the right way to use a house without expecting him to build it himself or even study architecture. Of course, considered in the abstract, it would be perfectly ideal to have people trained both as theological scholars and as pastors, so that each would sustain and vitalize the other. Such a "level" as this would indeed be higher than what

I am aiming at here as a pastorally determined theology. But when it becomes manifest (and it has) that, taking account of the time available for study, the normal degree of actual mental ability, and the type of aptitude common today, this "ideal" has become in practice, for most theology students, a matter not of mutual help but of the two goals hindering each other (the scientific standard not being attained, but the attempt to attain it checking and damaging the training of men for real pastoral work), then it becomes more ideal, *in concreto*, to refrain from being too idealistic, and to recognize instead what it is that we really want, rather than falling between two stools.

The fear that the young theologians following a course of this kind might get inferiority complexes *vis-à-vis* their colleagues taking the "scholarly" course, or that they will be regarded later on as a sort of second-class clergy, is without foundation. For worries of this kind are based on a world of sociological ideas and feelings which is in fact disappearing. Neither in America nor in Russia does the highly trained and qualified practical worker regard himself as socially "inferior" to the professor. And amongst us it is at least true that the doctor in general practice, who is capable simply of doing his own job, does not have any such complexes as regards medical researchers and specialists; the only question that matters is how efficient a man is in his own field.

(7) I have so far avoided embarking on the question of how the ideas put forward here are related to the various efforts which came together during the thirties under the watchword of "kerygmatic theology." Those efforts have not, so far, had a perceptible success. Nor was it to be expected that they would. Such things take time. They may also, per-

haps, have been delayed in having a stronger effect by the fact that the champions of kerygmatic theology were too apt to support their views with theoretical arguments of an academic nature which were in fact highly disputable. It really will not do to say that there are two theologies distinct from each other in the way supposed by Lotz and Lakner.

But having said this, thus stressing that all theology, if it is not to be untrue to its very nature, springs from preaching and has its goal in preaching—that it has to be holy, i.e., saving, theology, serving the work of salvation—it should not then have been possible to overlook to so vast an extent the fact that the real basic demand that was being made was after all justified.

For it is true that we cannot simply go on as before in the teaching of theology to future priests. It is true that this teaching of theology has got to be done with a clearer realization than hitherto of what it is aiming at. It is right to say (as Schmaus did) that in theology the road connecting scholarship with life has got to be shortened; that we have got to summon up the courage to move from an encyclopedic type of learning in theology, in which future pastors are lectured to *de omni re scibili*, to a theology in which the real subject-matter is not merely learned, brain-wise, once, and then left, half understood, embedded in the scholastic concepts of yesterday, but, while being studied with clarity and precision, is understood and entered into at a deeper level and so becomes a living possession. Obviously no one is opposed to this ideal in theory. But it is time to face the fact that the gap between ideal and reality has grown so great that there is need for a new, conscious attempt at closing it. The fact that such an attempt does not run counter to but accords with

the Church's principles concerning the training of priests is something on which Lakner had many useful things to say. It would take us too far afield to go any further here into the extent to which the proposals made by the "kerygmatic-theology" movement coincide with those made here, in theory and practice, and to what extent they differ.

(8) In all this, the "legislative" factor, the officially established norms etc., are neither the primary nor the ultimate thing. Laws relating to standards, division of subjects, allotment of lecture periods and so forth can be either a hindrance or a help towards a really living theology. The living spirit has got to come from elsewhere. For this reason, too, what has been said is not meant to the very slightest degree as an assertion that this spirit is everywhere lacking. Another point that would need to be explicitly examined is whether (and how far) the Church's legislation concerning the studies of those theological students who do not aim at an academic degree (and these are the only ones with whom we are here concerned) represents any kind of barrier to what I have been asking for here. Probably none at all; probably all that would need changing would be the content which has been in practice inserted into the forms laid down by that law. Perhaps what we have here is a task for the diocesan seminaries and the houses of studies of some of the great orders and congregations. It is they rather than the universities which have the opportunity here, because they are less rigidly subject to the law and can experiment on a small scale, more easily and less dangerously. Whatever happens, their ambition should be exercised in some other direction than that of becoming as much like a modern university as possible.

8

The Layman and the Religious Life

On the Theology of Secular Institutes

THE EXTERNAL OCCASION for writing this essay is a personal one, but its theme is of independent importance and will be treated as such here. Dr. Hans Urs von Balthasar has felt obliged to state, in an essay in *Civitas*,¹ that even "the best theologians of our time" have not yet caught up with papal theology on secular institutes; that against me, in particular, he "cannot refrain from making the serious reproach" that I hold a conception of the nature of the laity² which destroys

¹ "Wesen und Tragweite der Säkularinstitute," in *Civitas*, 11 (1955-6), pp. 196-210.

² Balthasar refers to my essay "Über das Laienapostolat" in *Der grosse Entschluss*, 9 (1954), pp. 245-50, 282-5, 318-24 (cf., in no. 10 [1955] of the same periodical, "Nochmals das eigentliche Apostolat der Laien," pp. 150-3). This essay is included in volume II of my *Theological Investigations*, London (1963), pp. 319-52 ("Notes on the Lay Apostolate"). It has appeared in French as "L'Apostolat des laïcs," in *NRT*, 78 (1956), pp. 3-32.

in advance any possible basis for a combination of the lay state with that of the Counsels.³ But this combination is the very heart of what the Church herself teaches about secular institutes in *Provida Mater*⁴ and *Primo Feliciter*.⁵

The question thus raised is no mere theologians' squabble. For a great deal depends on getting the position in the Church of members of secular institutes right, both in their relation to the laity and to religious and clergy. On this depends not only whether such institutes (still largely at the experimental stage) are set up in the right way, but also whether the right formation will be given to their members (on which depends the effectiveness of their apostolate), and above all whether we arrive at a right conclusion about what a layman in the Church, in virtue of his own particular position in it, is meant to be and to do.

The question is more difficult than it may seem at first sight. We must take it step by step.

Dr. Von Balthasar states it thus:

Can a life according to the Counsels given by Jesus Christ be combined with life in the world, i.e., following a worldly profession with whatever conditions and obligations go with it—the life of an ordinary lay Christian, in fact—or is it absolutely

³ "Wessen und Tragweite," p. 205.

⁴ AAS, 39 (1947), pp. 114-24, and 40 (1948), pp. 293-7. When, in what follows, page references are given to these official statements, it will easily appear to which document they refer. For literature on secular institutes one need refer only to Jean Beyer, S.J., *Les Instituts séculiers*, Bruges (1954), where complete references are given (pp. 15-29).

⁵ AAS, 40 (1948), pp. 283-90 (*Motu Proprio* of Pius XII). The Instruction of the Congregation of Religious, *Cum Sanctissimus Dominus*, of 19 March 1948, is also important.

necessary, if one is to follow the Counsels, to forsake the world in the sense of giving up one's worldly profession to devote oneself exclusively to the tasks of the Church's life and ministry: as a "cleric" in the usual sense, or as a member of an order (contemplative or mixed) or a religious congregation?⁶

Is this the right way to put it? What is "the world," and what is "the life of the ordinary lay Christian," with which the life of the evangelical counsels is to be combined? On the answer to this question, it seems to me, depends whether we answer Dr. Von Balthasar's question as he does, affirmatively (and can in that case go on, rightly, to invoke *Provida Mater* and *Primo Feliciter*, in which we do find the expression "life in the world" applied to the members of secular institutes), or whether we have to put the question in a different way and so arrive at a twofold answer to a twofold question.

If Dr. Von Balthasar had merely asked whether the life of the evangelical counsels can be combined with professions which would be called "worldly" in a descriptive sense (and, at least for a start, purely in that sense) in that they differ from the general activities of the clergy (again in a descriptive sense) and from what is in practice done by religious (the common life, contemplation, an apostolate organized by ecclesiastical authority), then we could answer Yes to his question. On this he can certainly appeal to those documents of Pius XII which he quotes.⁷ Nor do I have any intention of

⁶ "Wesen und Tragweite," p. 198.

⁷ Since Dr. Von Balthasar quotes all these passages in full, and I am not, in the sense made clear here, contradicting him on this point, there is no need to give the texts again. But at no point, even where they are not explicitly quoted, do they contain anything incompatible with the interpretation made of them here as referring to a purely *de facto*, descriptive, concept of the world and the laity.

contradicting him when he stresses the importance, the providential character, and the non-obviousness of the affirmative answer which the Church herself gives. On the contrary: We are bound to recognize that the Church regards as possible a combination of this kind between the "secular" life and the life of the evangelical counsels. We are bound to recognize that this is certainly not an entirely obvious thing to everybody, always and at all times, and that through this present teaching and practice of the Church (in encouraging secular institutes) an important extension of the possibilities of a life in the state of the Counsels has made its appearance, one which was not so clear in earlier times (despite analogies such as the military orders, etc.). If Dr. Von Balthasar hails this in enthusiastic terms, he has a perfect right to do so, as I hereby explicitly acknowledge. Nor shall I be withdrawing this assent (which is most willingly made) when I express certain reservations later on.

But does this settle the whole question, or is it only the beginning of it? Does the assent thus given mean that we have also got to give an affirmative answer to Dr. Von Balthasar's question precisely as he put it? Is it really the case that these papal pronouncements have given us all the clarity that can be devised, only that there are certain rather slow-minded theologians, entangled in the limitations of the clerical and religious life,⁸ who have not yet grasped it?

⁸ Dr. Von Balthasar speaks of "strong resistance in the ranks of the old orders" (p. 1); he says that "even the best theologians of our time have not yet caught up" with the theology of *Provida Mater* (p. 1); states that there is "discord" between the concepts in *Provida Mater* and those of Congar and myself (p. 8) and that he "cannot refrain from making a serious reproach" against me. It is obviously perfectly

I should like to begin by stating a double thesis and briefly explaining and establishing it, and only when this is done to come back to the question as put by Dr. Von Balthasar.

Thesis: The evangelical counsels, undertaken as a permanent form of life by definite vows⁹ recognized by the Church, are the actual, primary, formative factor in the lives of members of the secular institutes; it is the vows that determine the special character of their state (as a permanent form of life in the Church and in the sight of the Church as such);

possible for theologians to be out of step with papal pronouncements. Whether they are or not is simply a question of fact. But on a point of method, one may wonder whether, *a priori*, Dr. Von Balthasar can be right to imply the possibility that almost all theologians (not just Congar and I) stand opposed to these papal pronouncements, since he sees even "the best" of them as lagging behind the clarity and boldness of *Provida Mater*. (P. 1.) In a general way one may at least presume that a papal statement does not give a decision in a matter in which the "best theologians" have not even got to the point of seeing the problem.

⁹ I am simplifying the question by considering only those secular institutes in which *vows* are taken. There are such. There are others which, by analogy with the "*societates in communi viventium sine votis*" (CIC, can. 673ff.), bind themselves only by an oath or self-dedication binding in conscience (it seems that a simple promise of celibacy, in distinction from a promise of obedience, does not suffice: cf. Beyer, p. 225): see *Provida Mater*, art. 3, 2, 121; the existence of these does not affect the matter in hand. Thus we can, in the first instance, pose the question whether the institutes with actual vows belong on the side of the laity in the world or on that of the religious orders, from the point of view of their actual status in the Church. As to whether the answer to this question also applies to secular institutes without vows, we do not have to concern ourselves with this for purposes of the present enquiry. I think that the answer is Yes, but even if this is disputed, my actual thesis is not affected.

but the effect of the evangelical counsels thus undertaken by vow is that in an essential ("theological") sense such people have to be distinguished from the laity in the real meaning of the word, however much ("phenomenally" speaking) they resemble the laity in outward behaviour and in their "life in the world," and notwithstanding the fact that in many respects, not unimportant ones, canon law may assimilate them to the life of the laity in the world.

1. *First Step*

There is no disputing the fact, for a start, that there does exist an "empirical," "phenomenal" concept of "the world" and "the laity" in contradistinction to a strictly theological one (which is concerned with the essential nature of the thing). In canon law¹⁰ we find for instance the concept

¹⁰ I am referring at this point to the language of canon law not because it is in itself the only or even objectively the most important source of proof. But when the question is one of interpreting a document like *Provida Mater* and the other two connected with it, then the obvious thing to do is to call in evidence the document which is *the* fundamental one as regards the Church's legal language, and that is the *CIC*.

We cannot here go further into the question of why it is that in the nature of things (and not simply because of a carelessly inaccurate terminology) the world and the Christian in the world (the layman) bear this double significance. "The world" does not only have the two meanings of "the world created by God" and, on the other hand, the "evil" world (which it already has in Scripture); even the world in the good sense, to which a human being and Christian is allowed to belong, and to some extent always must belong (since for a Christian there is not and must not be any absolute, utter flight from the world)—even the world in this sense has a strange ambiguity and obscurity about it. The condition that it is in, even when it is not a

of *religio laicalis* (meaning a religious community whose members are "laymen" because they are not clerics), though these "laymen" are members of a religious order and to this extent are distinguished from the laity (can. 488, 4; can. 211, where the *status laicalis* appears in contradistinction to that of the clergy). In Canon 107 it is explicitly stated that *laici* too can be *religiosi* (members of religious orders), in which connection we should note that *laici* can be used simply as the opposite of *ecclesiastici*, which certainly includes *religiosi*. (Can. 1592.) Hence in Canon 491, § 1 *laici* and *religiosi* are mutually opposed. The layman is the person who is not a religious, though the same canon speaks of *religio laicalis*.

simple matter of guilt and sin, has something about it which is "in a bad way," which is "of evil" (sorrow, pain, death, error, darkness, tragedy, the burden of the Law as an external demand etc.), so that even the good that is immanent in it (which in itself requires an affirmative response, both as natural good and as open to the elevating power of grace) still has a dubious quality about it; the doubt whether it is in fact laying itself open to grace from above or has in fact (perhaps only secretly) closed itself against it; and this is a doubt which can never be finally resolved *in concreto* in this age of the world, because everything that we can encounter in the concrete in this natural world can be equally well the phenomenal and bodily expression *either* of sin *or* of redemption. Hence the world is ambiguous in itself for a start. And hence ultimately we have a twofold relationship to it, a twofold position in it and towards it (since we cannot ever simply abandon it, go out from it: 1 Cor. 5.10; John 17.14f.): our basic attitude (or perhaps we should say, still more prudently, its dominant accent, which is of course what takes concrete form in a state of life) can be that of a life which represents (for the Church) the fact that this world (even in its goodness) is not the ultimately real and decisive thing, that it has to be constantly broken open to grace again because it keeps shutting itself against it; and again, one can (and still be a perfect Christian) lead a life which

There are thus two concepts of *laici* in canon law. In any case, *laicus* does not necessarily (in this phenomenological sense) mean the opposite of the religious state (in its essential nature). So we cannot deduce, from the mere use of the word, that someone who is called a layman cannot, simply for that reason, be an embodiment in the Church of the essence of the religious state.

Similarly, "world" is a word with extremely variable meanings in the Church's official language. It can mean the spirit of the world and of the age in a bad sense. (Can. 1353.) In Canon 653, when a member of a religious order is sent back

proclaims the fact that grace has indeed come down to us, that everything is now redeemed, that the otherworldliness of grace has become this-worldly. Insofar as both attitudes have to do with the world (indeed, neither can ever be exclusive of the other), the world, in this phenomenal sense, is there for both of them, and both of them (looked at in the concrete) live "in the world" (for though this can, in the concrete, vary in terms of more or less, it can never be a matter of either-or; even the saint still eats and drinks and cannot and should not in practice do without many of the joys of this world). Insofar as the first of these attitudes is dominant—that of a permanent breaking-open and overcoming of this ambiguous world by setting up concrete signs of the truth that, in its present fashion, it is "passing away" (1 Cor. 7.31)—the person who adopts it as the groundplan of his life is, to that extent, no longer in and of this world; whereas he who adopts the second is still in and of it (leaving aside the fact that he will of course only attain this supernaturally transfiguring affirmation of the world asymptotically at best). Within the infralapsarian order of the grace of the Crucified, the ambiguity of the world results in a double relationship to the world within the Church; and the two together result in a double significance for the words "world" and "Christian in the world," even excluding the meaning of the sinful world and the Christian who is worldly in the bad sense.

to "the world," it has a purely empirical sense (= "outside the monastery"), since the religious who has here been sent back to the world has not yet been dismissed from the order (as he has been in the cases envisaged in Canon 646). A priest can be in "the world" (Can. 585), though the words can also be used to characterize those who, as opposed to real religious, lead a "secular" life in "the world" as tertiaries. (Can. 702, 1.) We can say in all confidence that in the language of canon law "the world" simply means, in practical terms, the sphere in which life is lived outside a monastic community. It is perfectly clear that to characterize life in the world in this way (= life outside a monastic community, which for its part has of course got to have the definite forms and characteristics provided for in canon law) is not to determine its special essential nature. A Christian virgin, a Christian ascetic of the early centuries, who were then the essential representatives *coram Ecclesia* (in the eyes of the Church) of the evangelical state of life, were living "in the world" in this empirical sense (which is that of modern canon law), but were nevertheless precisely the realization of what the religious life stands for as distinct from the life of the "laity" in the "world" (in the theological, not the purely descriptive sense).

Hence, when ecclesiastical statements describe the members of secular institutes as living in "the world" and as "lay people," this is at least not a positive proof that they are lay people in a theological sense, a sense concerned with the essential nature of the thing. All that is necessarily being said (and anyone who goes beyond this would have to prove it explicitly) is that they are living in "the world" in the sense that they follow a secular calling in a way that religious and

clergy, as recognized hitherto by canon law, do not in practice have and are not supposed to have, and that they do not live in a monastic community.

Nor does it prove more than this to find these official documents of the Church stressing that this "being in the world," even a certain¹¹ "drawing one's life from the world" is one of the essential characteristics of secular institutes differentiating them from the orders and religious congregations. Insofar as they are meant to differ from the orders precisely through this feature, this "being in the world" is of course essential to them and does give the secular institutes their characteristic stamp as distinct from the orders. But this does not exclude the possibility that both orders and secular institutes are at one in their essential nature (which is, precisely, the state of "perfection"), and that both, in virtue of this, are different from the laity and the world in a theological sense.

Hence it is simply not correct to affirm, as Dr. Von Balthasar does, that there can be no doubt that secular institutes belong to the world and the laity because *Provida Mater* etc. clearly and explicitly say so. What is said clearly and explicitly in these documents of the Church is what we have admitted from the beginning: that members of secular institutes "live in the world" and are not members of religious orders in the sense used by canon law, because they do not lead a common life (as do members of religious orders and of institutes which, like the orders, do have such a life); because they do not come under those provisions of canon law which the Church has laid down for those whom, in her

¹¹ *Veluti* is the cautious word used: AAS, 40 (1948), p. 285.

canonical language, she terms *religiosi*. No more than this is said. Anything beyond this remains open (initially at least). It is obvious that when the *character saecularis* is described as the *existentiae tota ratio* (the whole ground of existence) of these institutes,¹² this is meant only as distinguishing them from the orders. For it is clear that it is the evangelical counsels that are the actual ground of existence of the secular institutes as well as of the orders, this being the whole burden of the argument throughout *Provida Mater* (as I shall go on to show explicitly here).

The express statements of the Church do in fact leave no room for doubt that she regards the secular institutes as belonging to the "state of perfection." Membership of religious orders, of the "*societates in communi viventium sine votis*" (societies living a common life without vows, such as the Lazarists, Oratorians, Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul etc.) and of secular institutes, are regarded by *Provida Mater* and *Primo Feliciter* as the three ways of practising the evangelical counsels.

As has already been stressed, I am not here going into the question of whether these societies with a common life without vows can be regarded in a theological sense as belonging to the state of perfection, on the ground that they do have a strict, ecclesiastical tie with the fulfilment of the evangelical counsels (a promise, oath, or private vow), which binds them to the life of a community recognized by the Church and so does not belong merely and exclusively to the private and individual sphere; or whether they are merely assimilated by canon law to the state of perfection in the Church, because

¹² AAS, pp. 284.

of certain practical analogies despite essential differences, and so as to include them for administrative purposes in the religious state. The question is irrelevant here, because the members of the secular institutes I have in mind do in fact take vows, the nature of which has, indeed, still to be considered. But in any case secular institutes with vows coincide more closely with the actual life of the orders and the state of perfection than those institutes which, even though they do have a common life, have no vows, even private ones.

It is explicitly stated that secular institutes belong to the "status perfectionis iuridice ab ecclesia ordinati et recogniti" (that they are among the states of perfection juridically organized and recognized by the Church, and for this reason come under the Congregation of Religious: p. 286). Dr. Von Balthasar will say that he has never disputed this, but has said explicitly that the question was simply whether those who belong to the state of perfection in a secular institute thereby cease to be in the world and to be lay people. To make my answer precise it first has to be pointed out that it is expressly said that members of secular institutes have a "professio . . . quoad substantiam vere religiosa" (p. 284), though the intention of perfection made in this profession is to be worked out "in the world." This is clearly to say that the "substance of a vocation to a secular institute has the character of "the religious life," *religiosus* in such a context as this having, obviously, not the meaning of "religious" in common speech but, as it has in innumerable places in canon law, of "the life of a religious order" (cf. Can. 387ff., where *religiosus* is used in this sense not only as a noun but also as an adjective: *status religiosus*, *congregatio religiosa* etc.).

Life in secular institutes is thus, as to its substance, identical with that in the religious orders.

2. Theological Investigation

Nor is this hard to understand.

This substance is the life of the evangelical Church, so that it has a definite existence in her counsels lived in an association approved by the eyes,¹³ the effect of which is to give to the lives of its members, lived under a constitution approved by her, an existence in the visible dimension of the Church.

For what is supposed to be the one and substantially identical (not, as Dr. Von Balthasar will have it, "analogous")

¹³ It is explicitly said that the life of the secular institutes is led *probante Ecclesia* (p. 285); that they are a *status ab ipsa Ecclesia ordinatus et recognitus* (p. 286); that there is a *coram Ecclesia et publica ratione facta perfectionis professio*, from which the *vota* [*publica*] of the actual religious orders are distinguished as being a *professio* that is *strictius publica* (p. 115). The bearing of this observation is in itself historical, referring to the free ascetics and virgins of the early Church (not living a common life), but it can surely be applied in the same sense to the secular institutes. The *effectus canonici* added by the Church to these vows (p. 115), which make them into a *professio strictius publica* (p. 115), make these vows, which were already *coram Ecclesia et publica ratione*, into *vota publica* in the modern canonical sense, but do not mean that such a *professio* was till then to be regarded as a practice of purely individual, private, extra-ecclesiastical devotion. This alone is what makes it intelligible that the Church gives the name of "secular institute" only to those religious communities which are *recognized* by her. (P. 294.) For it is essentially impossible that there should be a "state" in the Church that does not exist as such in her eyes and with her knowledge. The more so as the religious life is, precisely, the representation of a very definite side of the Church, and the evangelical counsels, as a permanent way of life binding in the sight of God, cannot be understood at all without their ecclesiological function, precisely in the *visible* dimension of the Church.

nature of the "state of perfection," if not this?—a life according to the evangelical counsels as a way of striving for Christian perfection; an obligation to it (of whatever kind) in the eyes of the Church, amounting at least to the Church's recognition of this institute as a satisfactory way of living the Christian life of the Counsels; and the stability of this form of life, guaranteed by the Church's approval of the institute and by vows. In comparison with these essential characteristics, which are common to both the religious orders and the secular institutes, all the differences between them are secondary.¹⁴ This is of course not contradicted by saying

¹⁴ Hence again it is said (p. 295) that a secular institute is a "status quoad substantiam vere religiosus." It is clear that the sense of this is not weakened by the reference to an "imaginem referre status . . . quoad substantiam vere religiosi." For otherwise we should have to say (it being so expressed in the same passage) that the secular institutes are "a mere image" (in the sense of seeming to be what they are not) of a "status perfectionis completus," which would contradict everything the Church has said on the subject, and Dr. Von Balthasar's idea too. *Imago* here simply means "outward form as well"—the canonical, constitutional aspect, as the context shows.

Again, the question arises: What is supposed to be the substance of the religious life in the orders? *Insofar* as they differ from the secular institutes they include natural things (not part of their real substance) which are excluded from the lives of the secular institutes (religious habit, common life etc.). But these things cannot be part of the substance of the life of a religious order, insofar as that "substance" is the life of the evangelical counsels in the sight of the Church as a permanent form of life. For as far as concerns these other things, the line between the orders and the secular institutes is absolutely fluid (far more so than appears from the letter of canon law), while there are distinct differences as between the different orders. One only has to ask oneself what, *in concreto*, there is in all this that cannot be done by a religious and can by a member of a

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(*Provida Mater*, p. 118) that in the secular institutes total dedication to God is *fere religiosa*. I am not saying that members of secular institutes are "religious," this being what, by the explicit statement of the Church, they are not (in the sense used in canon law). I am only saying that the real substance of their lives, by reason of their vows in a community recognized by the Church, is the same as the substance of the life of the religious orders. And this is what the Church herself says.

We can at most say that there is a certain fluctuation in the language of these documents when *Provida Mater* (pp. 117-18) says that the secular institutes "proprius quoad substantiam accedunt ad status canonicos perfectionis" (that their substance approaches the canonical states of perfection). One may perhaps be permitted to say that one would prefer to see this formula avoided, if one sees clearly what has been said here, on the basis of the statements of the Church and of the nature of the case, about the essence and nature of the life of the secular institutes. For they do not merely "approach" the forms of the state of perfection; they are one such form, as *Primo Feliciter* expressly says (pp. 285-6). Alternatively, this questionable form of expression has to be explained thus: Insofar as they do not have any "canonica

secular institute? Of course it can be said that for the religious all this happens *per accidens* (life outside a community, non-wearing of the habit, work in the secular sciences or other worldly business), whereas in the secular institute it is so *per se*. But even so this observation proves that the habit, the common life, clerical occupations etc. cannot belong to the very substance of the religious life, whereas obedience, virginity etc. do so belong, for the latter cannot be given up even in the individual case, even *per accidens*.

disciplina status religiosi" (as *Primo Feliciter* also emphasizes, p. 285), they only "approach" the canonical states of perfection, even though (as is said in the same passage) a total dedication of one's whole life ("plena totius vitae consecratio") is involved in the secular institutes as in the religious orders. Thus the real substance of the life of the religious orders (in so far as it is a living of the state of perfection, of which the religious orders are precisely only one possible form), exists precisely in the same way in the secular institutes.

3. *A Digression*

Before proceeding with this investigation and focussing it on the points directly in dispute, there is a digression to be made. According to the statements of the Church, the vows made in secular institutes are not *vota publica* but only *vota privata*.¹⁵ Does that make a difference to this investigation or not?

It might indeed be possible to say that only public vows can really be the basis of a "state" in the Church, insofar as "state" involves a relationship to the Church as an externally perceptible community: insofar as a state is precisely a constitutive element of what the Church, through such states, presents visibly before the world in witness to God and his grace. One might be tempted to pursue these ideas to the point of proving from them that the members of secular institutes are, after all, in an essential, theological sense—not merely the "empirical," everyday sense—lay people.

But this would be a mistake.

¹⁵ AAS, pp. 119, 120.

In the first place, if it were right it would contradict not only the thesis formulated above but also the explicit statements of the Church. For the Church declares that it is possible to belong to the state of evangelical perfection and to have the substance of the religious life by belonging to a secular institute. We can only conclude from this that what the Church designates as *votum publicum* is not an essential constitutive factor in belonging to the state of perfection.¹⁶

There is nothing strange about this.

First of all, we should remember in this connection that the theological nature of a vow, as appears from the statements of Boniface VIII and Gregory XIII, is not affected by its being solemn or not solemn, public or private. Solemn and simple, public and private are primarily canonical elements governing the effect of a vow in canon law, given it by a positive act of the Church; not affecting the vow itself in its own nature and the consequences which flow from that nature. Hence we do not need here to examine more closely the nature of a "public vow" in the Church. (Cf. Can. 488, 1; Can. 1308, § 1.) We can simply say that the Church does not accord to the vows taken in a secular institute those effects which she confers, by positive statute, on the vows of a religious order; and hence she calls these vows private. This does not settle anything positively about the nature of the vows taken in secular institutes as such (as distinct from any other spheres affecting the personal con-

¹⁶ This is not of course by any means to say that *every* kind of private vow in the Church suffices to constitute a "state." The vow, even if only "private," would have to be taken in some way *coram Ecclesia* in order to be able to constitute a state in the Church and in the sight of the Church.

science alone), or about the effects that such vows necessarily have purely on account of their essential nature.

But if we examine these vows in themselves, then we have to say that they are taken in an association approved by the Church herself, in order to bind a person to the way of life thus approved by the Church; so that he may undertake a stable form of life proposed by the Church and supervised, in its conduct, by her. It cannot seriously be disputed that such a vow does in some measure exist in the forum of the Church,¹⁷ and hence is not merely a "private affair" of a member of such an institute. However unostentatious the visible external forms of a secular institute may be compared with those of an order (religious habit, monastery, common life etc.), yet they are things that exist in the public life of the Church, the Church is involved in them (which is why she makes them depend on her approval, and supervises them); they are a part of the Church's visibility. Their members are known to the Church, are under her direction etc. Even if a person's membership of a secular institute is not known to everyone in his ordinary everyday environment (and perhaps is meant to remain unknown, which for that matter can apply to a member of a religious order too), yet a secular institute is an element in the visible Church as such, and this applies also to its members as such. And hence, too, to that fact which, in practice, constitutes this association

¹⁷ AAS, p. 118, says accordingly that this *consecratio* to God in the secular institutes is *non interna tantum, sed externa*; that the secular institutes are *coram Ecclesia in foro externo* (p. 117), in contrast to those *perfectionis conatus* which are only in the *forum internum* under the guidance of a spiritual director.

and incorporates individuals into it: the bond and the unity which are the effect of the vows.

Though in a specifically canonical sense these vows may not be called "public," yet they are not the private affair of the individual person. They are a fact of the Church as such in her visibility. Hence "private" vows such as these (as distinct from many others, which also have to be called "private") can be the basis of a "state" in the Church and in the eyes of the Church. In a theological sense, they can be as much the foundation of a state as the public vows of religious.

The private character of the vows cannot, then, be adduced as an argument that the members of secular institutes are lay people in a theological sense, if by a layman in this sense we understand someone who does not belong to the "state of perfection." When the Church speaks of a "*professio fere religiosa*" in the secular institutes, she has no hesitation in presenting this *professio* as *externa*.¹⁸ But when a state of life is undertaken by vows and has an "external," permanent, tangible character, then those vows can no longer in a theological sense be described as belonging to the purely private, internal sphere, even if in the language of canon law they are not "public" but "private." Hence they too can constitute a state of life in the Church and in the sight of the Church.¹⁹

¹⁸ AAS, p. 118.

¹⁹ Whether the terminology thus developed in the course of history is entirely happy is of course another question. Objectively, it would be better to call all vows constituting membership of an institute, approved by the Church for striving towards evangelical perfection, "ecclesiastical" and hence "public" vows; and then to go on to divide

4. *Second Step*

We can now return to our real question. All we have proved so far is that members of secular institutes belong, as concerns the "substance" of their life, and in the strict and essential sense of "belonging," to that state of perfection which constitutes the life of the religious orders.

The question now is, are they still "lay people"? Do they still belong to "the world" in the sense in which the laity belong to the world and religious do not?

This is to some extent a question to which different and yet equally correct answers can be given according to what terminology one adopts. I have already said that if "the world" is to be taken as meaning that empirical, tangible environment in which professions are practised which clerics and religious normally do not practise, or even are not allowed to practise (medicine, commerce etc.),²⁰ then of course a member of a secular institute is in the world, and must be in it if he is not to deny his very vocation. The same applies to the absence of the religious habit and the common life.

this concept into species according to the canonical consequences resulting from the different kinds of vows. For, considering the matter in itself, it is not easy to see why, going by what the Church herself has said about secular institutes and the vows taken in them, they do not fulfil the requirements for "public vows" in the sense of Canon 1308, § 1, if one simply looks at the wording of the definition there made. It is not surprising that there are also secular institutes with *vota publica* (Beyer, p. 213), and that even the Congregation of Religious has declared that the "private vows" in secular institutes are not "adequately" private. (Beyer, p. 333.)

²⁰ Cf., e.g., can. 138 etc.

Again (though this needs qualification, since it is possible for priests to be members of secular institutes), by "lay people" living in the world we may understand people who have not received sacramental orders and hence do not share in the dignity and sacramental powers which in the Catholic Church are reserved to the clergy. If this is the terminology we use, then the members of secular institutes are simply lay people, living in the world, whose life is not lived at the altar and from the altar.

But this does not settle the question. It is still possible to ask how we are to describe that sphere of existence which is common to members of religious orders and secular institutes, belonging to which constitutes the substance of the way of life common to both of them, so that they both have the same "state" (of perfection). What is the one word with which we can describe them both, so as to express this one same state in one same sphere of existence?

If there were no simple, clear word for this one sphere of existence, and for the identity (despite all differences) of their basic way of life, this would not be a mere deficiency of terminology. A deficiency of this sort could easily have disastrous consequences; there would be a danger of no longer clearly understanding the thing that is involved. The danger would be great on both sides. Members of religious orders might start thinking of the particular *way* in which they, as distinct from the secular institutes, practise the state of perfection, as the essence of that state itself. They would then be unable to learn anything from the secular institutes. They would, for instance, not recognize sufficiently that they are not bound in the same way to a particular, traditional manner of practising the state of perfection as they are to

that state itself, to the very substance of the evangelical counsels; that the particular forms are things that they have in accordance with canon law and the statutes of their order; that they may perhaps *have* to have them (if they are to preserve their difference from the secular institutes), but that these things are nevertheless secondary in comparison with the substance of the state of perfection and consequently have to be adapted to the needs of the age and the demands of their apostolic mission.

In point of fact, we do see the older orders learning from the new secular institutes. There are plenty of congregations of nuns who have already learned that they are not bound, by their essential spirit, to the whole of the traditional ballast that they have been carrying hitherto; and they have seen this because the secular institutes have shown them that their life can go on without these things. But the secular institutes, too, would be in danger of blindness concerning their own nature at its deepest level. The substance of their own life is something that is also "made visible" in the way of life of the old orders, for even the external form of their life (not only the invisible "spirit" of it) is a realization and embodiment of those evangelical counsels to which the secular institutes are as strictly bound as they.²¹ Hence the problem of

²¹ Dr. Von Balthasar is of course right in stressing that the concrete embodiment of the evangelical counsels in the secular institutes has to be different from that in the orders. But this does not alter the fact that they can and must learn from the experiences of the orders, once they are clearly aware that the substance of their life is the same as theirs. It is, moreover, clearly stated in the papal documents that it would be false to suppose that in the outward form of their lives the members are not prohibited, by their vows, from anything whatsoever, so long as it would not be a sin for other lay people living in

nomenclature is not just a question of idle terminology, to be settled in a purely arbitrary way.

If we want to answer the question before us, and to use language in an ordinary, natural way (though language is always inadequate, with fewer words than there are things to express with them), then we shall have to say that the members of secular institutes are not simply lay people in the world in the way that lay people are. But Dr. Von Balthasar obscures this simple fact when he categorically forbids us to say that the members of secular institutes are not simply lay people and are not what we are talking about when we enquire into the real apostolate of the laity in the full sense of the word; when we are talking about the layman not in a merely descriptive, empirical, and perhaps canonical sense, but in a theological sense; a sense which is concerned

the world (this quite apart from what the vows directly renounce). This would be naïvely utopian. It is expressly said (pp. 284-5) that the "secular" lives of the members are only compatible with things "quae cum eiusdem perfectionis officiis et operibus componi valent"; that it must be possible to discern "externally" (*in foro externo*) the total character of their self-gift to God (p. 295); that what they are bound to goes beyond what even the *optimi fideles* are bound to, and this not only in the apostolate but also in their striving for perfection; nor is this meant to refer to the vows as such themselves, but to further consequences resulting from them (p. 296). So it would be presenting the matter in a way entirely contrary to the mind of the Church if we were to suppose that, apart from the sheer obligation to the evangelical counsels strictly as such, everything about the secular institutes could and should be exactly the same as amongst any of the devout laity. Our present line of enquiry, too, leads to the conclusion that even the empirical, phenomenal aspect of the secular institutes (to say nothing at all of their substance) cannot simply be that of the *optimi fideles*, the most devout among the laity.

with a really essential theology of the Church and the distinction between the various states which must of necessity belong to her.

5. *A Theological View of States in the Church*

From this point of view, there is not an unlimited possible number of states in the Church.²² There are only two principles by which "states" are divided from each other, each of which presents us with two states, so that the net result is, if you like, three states; but they result not from one process of differentiation but two quite disparate ones. There is the differentiation between those who hold Christ's commission

²² Cf. can. 107: "Ex divina institutione sunt in Ecclesia clerici a laicis distincti, licet non omnes clerici sint divinae institutionis; utrique autem possunt esse religiosi." It is clear from this, in the first place, that the distinction clergy-laity arises from the original will of Christ in founding his Church. In this respect, then, there cannot be any other states in the Church of a comparably primary character. But we can confidently venture to say that there is and must be a state of evangelical perfection in the Church which is also *iure divino*, because of the very nature of the Church. This proposition does not need to be established here. Nor does it involve saying that the fact of canonical regulation of this state in the Church is also *iure divino*. It is the state, not the law of religious orders, that is here declared to be a necessary factor in the Church, and indeed a visible one. If this is correct, then it follows from what is said in this canon that there are basically three states in the Church and not more. For one cannot point to any other state which is similarly *iure divino*. And it would be hard to see how any such unknown state could be in fact combined with the three states named, as it would have to be, since every Christian belongs to one of these three states.

(as sent by him) to administer his gifts and to command, and those who receive the gifts and obey—the distinction between clergy and laity; and there is the differentiation (in the subjective way in which the one same Christianity is appropriated and manifested, and in which the one same goal of Christian love is striven for) between the state of the evangelical counsels and—the laity. We have to put it this way, because there simply is no other generally intelligible word in ordinary use than “the laity” (which does not mean that it is not subject to misunderstanding, or that it is absolutely unambiguous).²⁸

6. *Consequences of This for the Secular Institutes*

But if we take “layman” in the sense of this basic division between the real, essential states in the Church—in a truly ecclesiological and theological sense, that is—then we cannot but say that the members of secular institutes are not lay people. And to the extent that they are not, they are also not in the world. If someone still wants to maintain, what I have admitted from the first, that in many respects these people are lay people and do live in the world, then I can only, and need only, repeat that even independently of this opinion of mine these words do cover a range of meanings (as I have shown), that this variety of reasons, being recognized, does not necessarily have to lead to misunderstandings,

²⁸ It has already been shown that canon law speaks of the layman as the opposite of the religious considered as the (one and only) embodiment of the evangelical counsels.

and that this terminology is neither superfluous nor avoidable so long as there simply is no other word that briefly expresses the thing that I mean, and that does exist.

And this is the point

It is, in fact, of basic importance to be clear about the fact stated in this thesis (that the members of secular institutes are in a theological sense not lay people in the world). Let us put to ourselves, simply and straightforwardly, what it is that we are talking about: people who, definitively, spontaneously and of their own resolve, for a motive which is possible only from faith in the incomprehensible word of God, renounce marriage; choose to be "poor"; and renounce, through obedience, the free disposal of their own lives. We can make the concrete forms of this life according to the evangelical counsels as variable as we like; we can cut out as much as we like of what belongs to the ancient monastic tradition and not to the essence of such a life; but, if we keep our sense of plain reality and know what these things involve, in the concrete, in terms of living, then we shall not be able to avoid saying that these people are not people of this world, not "normal" lay people. To renounce marriage in principle is to have no home in this world. Such a person may then have, from God in the name of Christ and the Church, an extremely intensive mission to the world; to fulfil this mission he may immerse himself as deeply in the world as he possibly can; he may practise a secular profession (and do well in it, in the service of his supernatural mission); but he no longer belongs to the world as does the "normal" lay Christian.

I can only put it like this: A person who sets himself against admitting this simple fact is only showing that he has

not understood very much about the nature and meaning of marriage (or else that he rates celibacy as a purely physiological renunciation, which certainly does not correspond to the meaning of Christian virginity). Dr. Von Balthasar may say that I am stating the meaning of Christian virginity one-sidedly, and hence falsifying it. There is no need to quarrel about this here. It is a renunciation which does at least include as an element in it a farewell to a simple, straightforward human involvement in the world. The teaching of the Gospel and of St. Paul shows this. Whether or not this is the only essential aspect of Christian virginity, it is at least there. Virginity cannot be undertaken without seeing, assenting to and living this element in it. Hence such a life simply cannot be a worldly life in the theological sense of the states in the Church.

In comparison with this radical renunciation, and the equality with the life of religious orders which it involves, all the "secularity" of the secular institutes is merely secondary; for in comparison with this renunciation, the practice of a "secular" profession and life outside a monastic community are really only secondary, when one considers that regular religious also conduct schools and do every sort of thing to earn their livings, so that it is by no means easy to say what the secular institutes can and may do that is impossible or forbidden to the religious orders. The difference, which is there and is not to be made light of, certainly does not penetrate to the substance of a human being, to his ultimate basic attitude, as does renunciation of marriage and of the independent construction of one's own life according to one's own plan, freely, and making use of property according to one's

own independent disposition of it.²⁴ Modern conditions of life may have brought it about that these renunciations are no longer as striking and obvious as they used to be, directly and empirically, as a representation in themselves and for the Church of the grace that comes from above and beyond nature. Nevertheless, whenever these acts of evangelical renunciation are really lived, they remain—both for the person who is living them and for those around him—that *skandalon* which is not of this world.

Of course every Christian is bound to have the spirit of Christ, of his cross, and hence of the evangelical counsels: to have it and to keep acquiring it more and more, until, in death, he too dies to the world and thus receives the consecration of eternal life; but in the laity this spirit is not realized in an ecclesialogically tangible and representative way, as discernible, that is, in the direct demands of the evangelical counsels, which aim at the means, not only at the spirit, of the love of the Crucified which overcame the world. It is basically this difference which distinguishes the states from each other, and because of this a person vowed to the Counsels in a secular institute is ranged with members of religious orders over against the real laity.

²⁴ *Provida Mater* explicitly stresses that obedience in the secular institutes is an obedience *in omnibus*, and that a "full and mutual bond" is required between the institute and its member, so that the member commits himself entirely to the institute. (P. 121.) From this it follows that the institute is home for its members; that they are no longer related in the same way as normal lay people to their families and to their natural bodily and spiritual origin and home. Here, again, there is no real, essential difference to be seen between members of religious orders and of secular institutes.

7. *The Apostolate of the Laity and
the Secular Institutes*

It is only when we have seen, starting from a theology of the states in the Church, that a member of a secular institute belongs with the members of religious orders as against the real laity, that the way is clear for us to look at the question of what the real apostolate of the laity is. This was the subject of the essay which Dr. Von Balthasar attacked. If you look at the layman through a member of a secular institute, so to say, you cannot avoid ascribing to the lay apostolate—at least at the ideal level—tasks and functions to which the secular institutes are indeed called by God, because they are required to think only of that which is the Lord's; whereas to ask them of the layman would be to ask for what is not his vocation, and this cannot but lead to the real layman's not fulfilling the really specific function which is truly his own.

Right at the beginning of this investigation I said that I am not disputing against Dr. Von Balthasar that our non-worldly, non-lay member of a secular institute can, and even must—according to the special character of his institute—practise a “worldly” profession; nor denying that this extension of the state of the counsels into these “worldly” professions is a very important event in the history of the Church and the Christian life. Once having admitted this, one may surely still wonder, quite temperately and honestly, whether it is really very probable that this combination of a worldly profession and the state of the counsels²⁵ by the grace of God (which

²⁵ I am thinking of cases in which the secular profession is not simply a way of earning one's living, and not merely forced on one by difficult social or political circumstances.

does not exclude the operation of natural factors in the situation) can be expected to happen in so many cases in the future that it will really bring about the revolutionary consequences in the life of the Church which Dr. Von Balthasar expects of it.

The feminine character, more apt in many respects for renunciation of marriage than the masculine, and the nature of characteristically feminine professions (as already practised in orders of women, where the work done corresponds to a much greater degree to the work done by women in the world than is the case in men's orders), leave little room for surprise that there are already secular institutes for women in relatively large numbers.

But is it to be expected that there will be a similar flowering of secular institutes amongst men? Dr. Von Balthasar himself observes "that there are as yet hardly any institutes with men as their members, while the ones for women are often only somewhat freer versions of the already existing congregations, devoted to teaching, nursing, auxiliary parish work etc."²⁶

May we not wonder whether there are not very profound reasons for this observation? If a man's relationship to his secular calling is really strong and primary, and not simply prompted by an apostolic motive (to be so prompted would militate against practical success in it, which in turn is the necessary basis for its apostolic usefulness), then is not that relationship going to be simply one element in his total attitude towards earthly existence, one which in by far the majority of cases will include acceptance of marriage and exclusion of virginity?

²⁶ P. 13, n. 13.

Look at it plainly and sensibly; take a man with a real, valid, primary relationship (meaning one not directly dependent on a supernatural approach or an immediately apostolic aim) to a secular profession—chemist, doctor, oil-drilling engineer or whatever it may be (and he has to have this kind of relationship if he is going to do anything with his job beyond merely earning his living): is it possible that he will, in any considerable number of cases, have that attitude of aversion from the world which is presupposed in evangelical virginity, and which a man has, or ought to have, just as much, if he belongs to an apostolic order in which, after his radical renunciation, he comes back into the world in so apostolic a fashion that his use of every suitable means for his apostolate makes him look indistinguishable from a “man of the world”?

And really, with the shortage of priests that we have today, and the great gaps in the Church’s directly hierarchical apostolate, why should there be many cases (freely admitting, of course, that there will be a few) of men who, while committing their lives totally to the Lord’s affairs and leaving everything to follow the Crucified in poverty and obedience, choose not to undertake the priesthood, even though they are mentally and (as their lives according to the evangelical counsels would prove) morally suitable for it?²⁷ In order to

²⁷ May I be permitted here to put forward a hypothesis, honestly and bluntly, for consideration by those who know the circumstances better than I? If there are countries in which vocations to secular institutes for men are more numerous than amongst us in Central Europe, is this not because in these countries the clergy maintain a way of life that is somewhat too fettered by history and old-fashioned, so that it is not so very strange to find young men who would in fact be entirely capable of an apostolate as priests getting the idea that

penetrate and inform the secular sphere with Christianity, in a way that the clergy itself cannot do with its hierarchical apostolate?

But this is precisely what the laity are there for, the real laity without any qualification of the word.²⁸ Here, precisely, is their own most proper and primary task, which belongs to them at least as much as the fact that they do not live in the state of the evangelical counsels. For if they did not have this

they should refrain from becoming priests so as to be able to carry on an active apostolate (and to do it with the whole of their lives and energies)? More than thirty years ago, a young man (for whose beatification efforts have since been made) explained to me his intention of becoming an engineer instead of a priest *in order to do something for the Church and the salvation of souls*. He may, indeed, have been wrong about the situation in his own country. But perhaps this little episode has its significance. I would guess that where these historical restrictions, in the shape of a strong caste-difference cutting off the ordinary parish clergy, do not exist, the vocation of those who are willing to accept celibacy will in most cases be straight to the priesthood, and not to secular institutes; especially amongst us, where there is a great shortage of priests and consequently there will be no sense of going to work in a field where workers are already superabundant.

²⁸ It simply cannot be said that a married man is not (*per se*) sufficiently capable of this. This could only be seriously asserted if what one had in mind was not the apostolate of a secular profession as such, but an additional apostolate, merely taking place *within* one's professional milieu, and requiring a person to give himself more or less totally to it. But can an apostle of this kind really be validly practising his secular profession? Do we not rather have here the equivalent, at the level of the Church, of such people as trade union officials, who may still call themselves, *honoris causa*, or as reminiscences of their earlier life, miners or welders or such like, but are really something quite different?

task, precisely as lay people, what task would they have that was truly and inalienably their own? If we could not point to any such task, then we should be turning the layman from a person holding a particular state in the Church (with a positive justification for his existence and a specific task of his own) into a person characterized solely by the fact that he is inferior to the "real" Christians, the people following the evangelical counsels. But if this is false, if the married laity are a state that is really meant to be there in the Church as such, and not mere second-class Christians, then it is not possible to deny that they have, in full and ideal measure, the task of the Christian penetration of the world; that it is they, in the first instance, who have to sanctify the secular professions and practise them as the representatives of Christianity, and not the members of the secular institutes, who have made the evangelical counsels the centre of their lives. Their combination of the evangelical counsels with a secular profession (the possibility of which is in no way disputed) is, seen from this point of view, not a primary thing in their lives but a tactical method in the service of an apostolate which is, basically, part of the Church's hierarchical apostolate. It is this apostolate which is, for them (in contrast with the really lay life), the sole aim; for it, all means, so long as they are useful, possible and lawful—including, therefore, working in a secular profession—are to be used.

How far, starting from this point, an apostle of this sort may in fact achieve a relationship to his secular profession that is almost the equivalent of a primary one, giving him a corresponding relationship to the world, is simply a question of fact. A member of a religious order teaching chemistry or astronomy at a lay university may, in his love of his subject

and his successful work in it, be practically indistinguishable from his lay colleagues (especially as there are certainly plenty of laymen who for one reason or another have only a very incomplete or oblique relationship to their professions). But this does not alter the fact that, at least so long as the religious in question has not (perhaps without noticing it) been interiorly unfaithful to his vocation to the evangelical counsels, he does not have the same relationship to chemistry or astronomy as a real layman.

To the layman this life is the life that is simply there for him, the life in which he finds himself placed, and in which he strives to serve God; to the religious, it is the sphere into which he enters, from the standpoint of his own, different state, in order to save souls. I repeat that this second way of practising a profession in the world is entirely legitimate; as legitimate as Paul's tent-making. A man who has received this vocation from God as a member of a secular institute has no need to be ashamed of his vocation. It is the higher one. This focussing of a worldly profession on a more sublime goal involves no devaluation of the profession itself, even though perhaps in the majority of cases the level of achievement in the professional field as such may not be very high, since this is not on the whole to be expected.

Nor has all this been said by way of a sceptical prognosis of the prospects for secular institutes for men (I feel no call to be among the prophets). It is said because it seems to me that only if this is seen and said will the necessity be clearly seen of awakening the laity to that task of which, seeing the thing as a whole, not even the members of male secular institutes can relieve them: the task of living exemplary lives from a worldly standpoint (which means "state") so as to

Christianize secular life, from the mere earning of a living through the sphere of a chosen, loved and personally fulfilled profession into that of marriage and the family. If people think that this task—at least as regards its perfect fulfilment—is primarily the task and vocation of those who have heard and heeded the summons to the evangelical counsels (whereas “profession” means, for them, precisely these counsels themselves), then the urgency of mobilizing the real laity for their Christian vocation is not going to be clear enough.

People might get the idea that the Christianizing of the world as such is the primary task of those who follow the evangelical counsels, whereas on the contrary for them a secular life is only a means to an end (their personal sanctification, or some apostolic work). This would lead to asking too much from the non-laity (in the theological sense) and too little from the real laity (in the theological sense). There would no longer be any clear theology of the apostolate of the laity in those areas where it is neither something auxiliary to the Church’s hierarchical apostolate nor a means to an end. I think that in order to avoid this it is permissible not to rule out as false in advance a certain scepticism as regards the possibility of having very many cases (not as regards the justification in principle) of a combination, in men, of the state of the Counsels with a secular profession. A person who does really have this vocation to a male secular institute will surely not be alarmed at hearing that this is likely to be a very rare vocation which, useful though it is to the Church’s apostolate, cannot be a substitute for the apostolate of the laity, for which the laity has got to be encouraged and prepared; and hence that his vocation does not make this encouragement and preparation any less urgent.

8. *Conclusion*

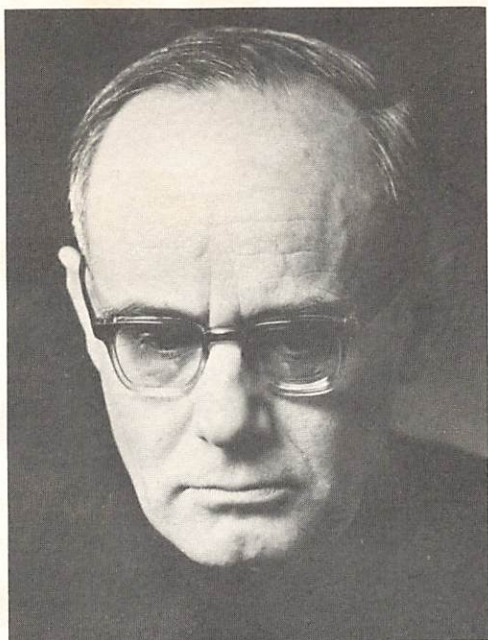
And so I came back to the question which Dr. Von Balthasar set at the beginning of this investigation (p. 198). To the question as put we can say neither Yes nor No; we have to turn it into two questions. First, is it possible to combine a life according to the evangelical counsels with a secular profession, with whatever conditions and obligations go with it (at least in principle, even if it is likely that instances will be rather rare²⁹)? The answer to this question is, Yes. Second, is a person who lives by the evangelical counsels in a secular profession an "ordinary lay Christian" (to use Dr. Von Balthasar's formula), so that he has not, like a religious, forsaken the world (understanding "world" and "forsaken" in a truly theological and not a canonical and descriptive sense)? The answer to this question is, No.

So when we discuss the apostolate of the laity, understanding "laity" in an essential, theological sense, we must not, in order to arrive at the ideal form of this apostolate, enquire into the apostolate of secular institutes, but into that apostolate which is proportioned and conformed to those who live in the world as married people and with a primary relationship to a secular profession. This is still not to say that the members of secular institutes must necessarily always take part in the actual hierarchical apostolate of the clergy. It may be so, but it need not be. Since someone who is not a cleric is not bound to this immediately and directly pastoral apostolate outside the sphere of his own natural life, it is possible

²⁹ Rare not only in relation to the whole body of Christians but also to the number of vocations to the evangelical counsels and the priesthood.

for someone living the life of the evangelical counsels in the world to refrain from this apostolate³⁰ and confine himself to the apostolate which automatically results from a Christian performance of his secular profession. In my opinion, then, he does not necessarily have to "devote himself exclusively to the tasks of the Church's life and ministry," even though he is not, in my opinion, a layman in the strictly theological sense. For one can cease to be a layman not only by becoming a cleric, but also by living the life of the evangelical counsels under vows in the sight of the Church.

³⁰ Whether this is also possible under canon law is something that would have to be investigated on its own. The question is, whether there could be, so to say, a contemplative type of secular institute. This does not involve any contradiction in itself. It is true that the official documents on the secular institutes, stating what the Church wants and requires of them, stress the apostolate to such a point that from this point of view the question must remain an open one. Cf. p. 296: ". . . totalis apostolatus consecratio." But one can still ask the question (and answer No to it) whether apostolic activity of this kind, full-time, done directly for its own sake, chosen, organized, and absorbing a person's whole life, is compatible with the theological concept of a layman.



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